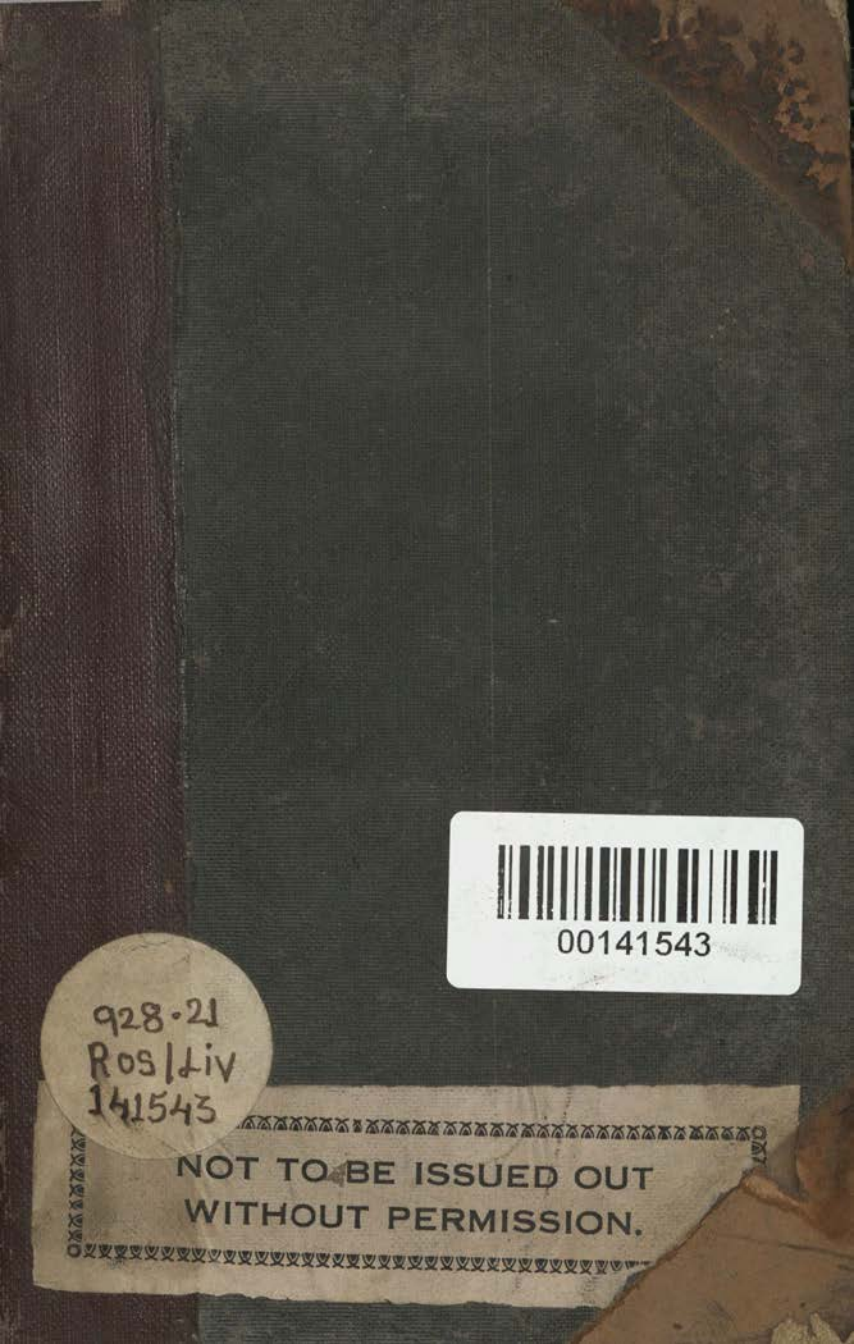
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OF FAMOUS POETS.

J. Severn. H. Robinson

John Keats.

London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street, 1838.

LIVES OF FAMOUS POETS.

BY

WILLIAM MICHAEL ROSSETTI.

B2147

A COMPANION VOLUME

TO THE SERIES

MOXON'S POPULAR POETS.

141543

POETS BORN BEFORE CHAUCER.

CAEDMON	from early in the 7th century to *circa* 680.	
KING ALFRED	from	849 to 901.
LAYAMON	wrote	*c.* 1205.
ORM (or ORMIN)	wrote	*c.* 1205.
THOMAS OF ERCILDOUNE (the Rhymer)	wrote	*c.* 1280.
ROBERT OF GLOUCESTER	wrote	*c.* 1300.
ROBERT DE BRUNNE (or MANNING)	wrote	1338.
JOHN BARBOUR	from	*c.* 1320 to *c.* 1395.
JOHN GOWER	from	*c.* 1325 to 140[illegible]
WILLIAM LANGLAND	wrote	*c.* 1362.

ERRATA.

Page [illegible] line 11, *for* his Epistle *read* his second (but now numbered first) Epistle.

Page [illegible] line 15, *for* poor *read* pure.

Page [illegible] line 8 from bottom, *after* and *dele* , [comma].

Page [illegible] line 3, *for* playing *read* plaining.

[illegible] last line, *for* 1809 *read* 1808.

Page [illegible] last eight lines, *dele* the words from "She was a cousin" to "beauty of a leopardess." Mr. Forman, in his edition (just published, February 1878) of the Letters of Keats to Miss Brawne, proves that that lady was not the same person as the so-called "Charmian."

PREFACE.

to the reader that I should explain a little of the his book, and its limitations.

es of works named *Moxon's Popular Poets* has been public for some years past: I began editing it in h volume in that series contains a Prefatory Notice —mainly biographical and partly critical. When ompleted two or three years ago, some of my ere so far satisfied with these Notices as to would make a serviceable and readable little gether in a collected form: the public will his opinion was right or wrong. For me, as not unnatural to hope that the opinion might ; and, the publishers having readily assented on the subject, on the understanding that s should be added to those already issued volumes, the present book is the result. The have, in each instance, been carefully revised, essary, enlarged or modified.

re-edited by me in *Moxon's Popular Poets* are

continual perusal. The se
Spenser, Shakespeare, Butler, D
In order to keep up in the reade
conception of the main stream of British
writers specially dealt with, I have add
sequence, the names of other poets of celebr
of birth and death so far as ascertainable : these
in successive lists inserted here and there betwee
of the poets about whom I have written, accordin
of birth. Beyond this I have not attempted to carry
of our poetry as a whole.

I am not aware that any book, closely corres
mine in scope and treatment, is in the hands of
already. My attempt amounts to something
deavour to produce a supplement, suitable for r
present day, to Johnson's *Lives of the Poet*
may say so without an appearance of presumpt
raising a comparison damaging to my own
tensions here. Receding from any questio
of the relative scale of treatment, I may obse
son's *Lives*, several (as indeed most of my rea
written with much more amplitude than mi
others are still shorter. Johnson gives fift
earliest writer in date of birth being Walle
latest, Akenside, 1721. Only six of the poe
Johnson—Milton, Butler, Dryden, Pope, Tho
—reappear in the present volume ; some of hi
totally—or all but totally—forgotten.

or exhaustive

00141543

om attempting any serious analysis of the prose. have fallen into some errors of fact—not to nion—I am but too well aware. A Chaucer ot conceal from myself, is likely to find me at r; a Milton expert, in Milton; a Coleridge expert, and so on. To this I must resign myself; small contribution to an understanding and love should be found, in its entirety, to meet something vant, and to meet it without doing grave discredit —I might say so national and sacred—a cause.

W. M. ROSSETTI.

1878.

INSCRIBED

TO

TWO BELOVED MEMORIES.

OLIVER MADOX-BROWN,

WRITER AND PAINTER,

DIED 5 NOVEMBER 1874,

AGED 19.

MARIA FRANCESCA ROSSETTI,

WRITER AND SISTER OF THE POOR,

DIED 24 NOVEMBER 1876,

AGED 49.

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GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

Up to the time of Chaucer, and of his older contemporary William Langland, the author of the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, there was not a single authentically great writer in the English language, whether in poetry or in prose. Scholars and critics could cite various authors whom they view with affection, Cædmon more especially, and this not without reason, for he was of the rank of those men who found literature and raise a language from the spoken and written tongue to a literary condition, who give it a name and a place among languages which promote, and which partly constitute, civilization. Chaucer achieved this glory for his country, and for himself. With him we have just now named William Langland (but without warrant, called Robert) Langley, as indicating that Langland shares with Chaucer not a splendour, but in order that we might more clearly have pinpointed the writer who, before Chaucer's prime, in point of proximity to him and to the influences which had already succeeded in distancing all predecessors and in leaving a lasting bequest to his posterity of English letters, and to ours.

In the life of Geoffrey Chaucer several particulars have been left on record from time to time by successive enquirers: unfortunately it happens that what one man propounds as a fact, advances as an ingenious suggestion, is found by another to

be fictitious or gratuitous. The most recent investigations[1] have been amongst the most cautious, and the richest as well as safest in results.

For Chaucer's birth two widely severed dates have been assigned—1328, and 1340 or thereabouts. For the first there is no authority, worthy to be so called. For the second there is the authority of Chaucer himself, who, having to make a deposition in 1386 as a witness in a cause of chivalry between Lord Scrope and Sir Robert Grosvenor, averred that he was then "forty years old and upwards", and had borne arms for twenty-seven years. Considering that, if born in 1328, he would in 1386 have been fifty-eight, it is difficult to suppose that he would under those conditions have called himself "forty years old and upwards"; and difficult consequently to imagine that he really was born in 1328. The force of this objection is indeed to some extent diminished by the fact that other witnesses in the same cause were equally and proverbially loose in stating their ages—loose to the extent of ten or even twenty years. But, on the whole, it is safer to believe that Chaucer told the truth unprecisely than that he affirmed what would amount to a practical falsehood; and I shall, without much hesitation, assume 1340 as near the right date of his birth.

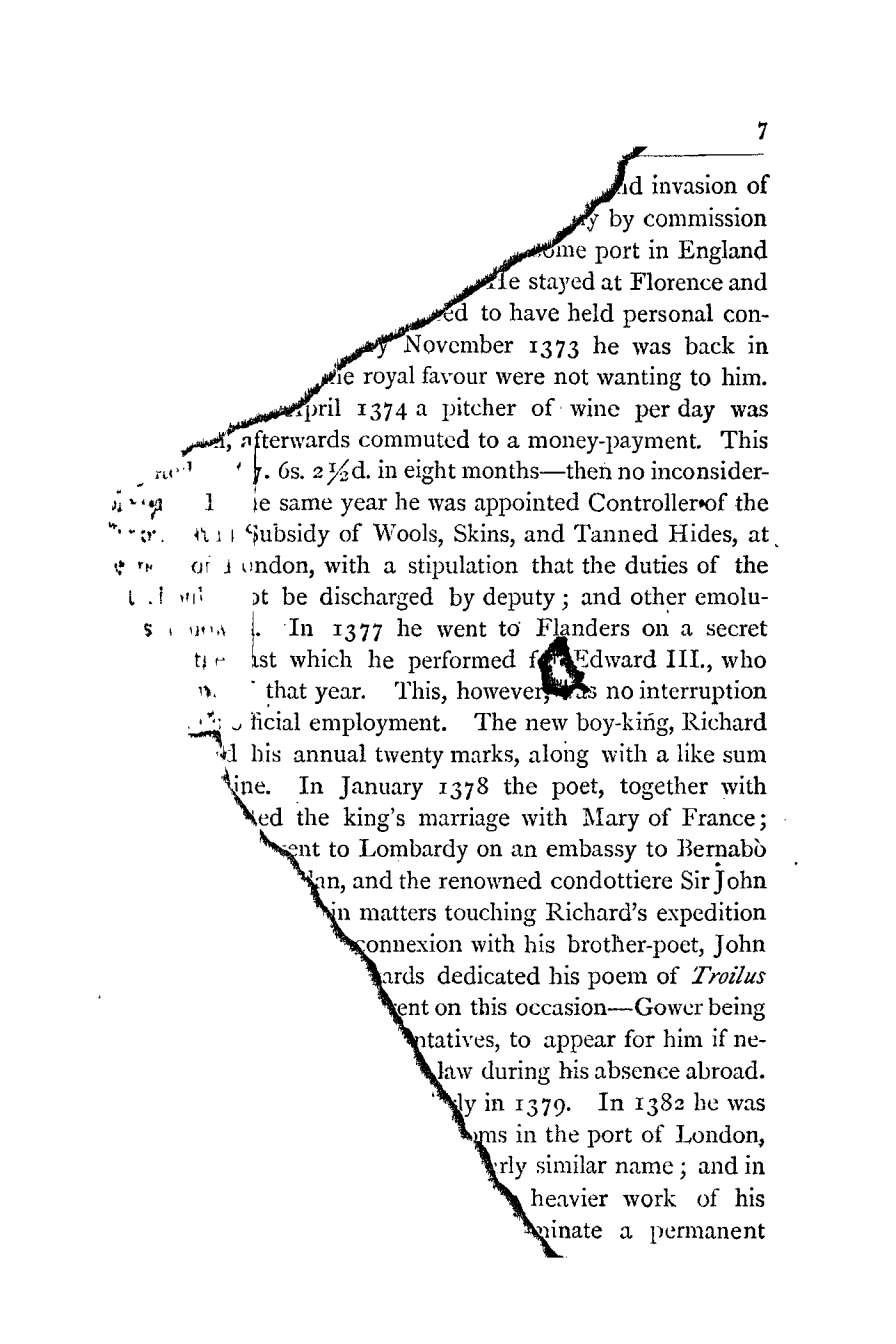
His grandfather was Richard Chaucer, vintner; his father John Chaucer, vintner, of Thames Street, London, where in all likelihood Geoffrey was born; his mother, Agnes, heiress of Hamo de Copton, a citizen and moneyer ("monetarius") of London. Geoffrey was probably the eldest son of the marriage. His surname is properly French—Chaucier, or Chaussier (or Le Chaussier, as one sometimes finds it), pointing to some ancestral shoemaker or hosier. He received the education of a gentleman, and may perhaps have studied at Cambridge. He was versed in astronomy, and in the other sciences and scholarship of his time. It is probable that from 1

[1] For which we owe a debt of special gratitude to Mr. F. J. Furnivall.

r, wife of Lionel,
s said to have been at
member of the legal pro-
the Inner Temple; but this also is dubious. A
Inn of Court is cited showing that "Geoffrey
ined two shillings for having beaten a Franciscan
reet. One need not discredit the story: but
eoffrey Chaucer was the prospective author of
Tales is a separate and undetermined question.
e poet was closely connected with John of
f Lancaster, another of the king's sons. In
in the French war under Edward III., and was
by the enemy near "the town of Retters"
s the village of Retiers, near Rennes in Brit-
afterwards—in 1360—he was ransomed, and
and, the king having p £16 as a part (not
e whole) of the stipulated sum. In 1366, or pos-
an earlier date, he was an Esquire of the King, or
s estate"; and in the following year he is termed
King's Chamber, with a stipend of twenty marks

or other Chaucer married a lady named
and the person are both uncertain. Some
he marriage took place probably as early
before September 1366. It is seemingly
offrey Chaucer, and Philippa Chaucer
down for Christmas gifts from the
1369, both of them were to have
Damoiselle" might be supposed to
but this is not a necessary infer-
e term was still applied to wives
find a pension of £10
hilippa Chaucer for life.
nes that this Philippa

Chaucer was alre
Yet this is but a surm
the same person, but not as yet mar
may have borne the maiden name of Chauce
fortuitous coincidence or as being Geoffrey's cousin. I
but hardly probable, were a not unnatural verdict on su
theory. Perhaps the chief reason for adopting this view—th
view that Chaucer was not married to Philippa at the date
when the latter is first recorded as Philippa Chaucer—is the
assumption that the poet had, during eight years ending towards
1368, been in love with some other lady, as indicated in hi
Complaint to Pity, of which I make mention further on :
this, after all, is a little arbitrary, for we know nothing pr
about that love-affair, and Chaucer *may* have been at onc
husband of Philippa and the unaccepted gallant of a diff
lady. Apparent fa hould not be strained or ignored t
the requirements of morals ; a *caveat* which a candid hi
is continually forced by his predecessors to be
However this may be, the likely date of Chauc
has recently been put a good deal further o
1374 is proposed. That is the date of a do
John of Gaunt assigned £10 per annum fo
in terms which modern enquirers consider t
latter had now quitted his patron's service.
Chaucer, it used to be affirmed, was a ma
of Sir Payne Roet, a native of Hainaul
Arms. She was afterwards attached t
second wife of John of Gaunt, and
Lady Swynford, who became the
wife of the same prince. But all
matter of conjecture, and of c
sociation of recorded nam
maiden no less than mar
to be decisively set asi



d invasion of
y by commission
me port in England
e stayed at Florence and
d to have held personal con-
November 1373 he was back in
e royal favour were not wanting to him.
pril 1374 a pitcher of wine per day was
, afterwards commuted to a money-payment. This
. 6s. 2½d. in eight months—then no inconsider-
e same year he was appointed Controller of the
Subsidy of Wools, Skins, and Tanned Hides, at
ndon, with a stipulation that the duties of the
ot be discharged by deputy; and other emolu-
. In 1377 he went to Flanders on a secret
st which he performed f Edward III., who
that year. This, however, was no interruption
ficial employment. The new boy-king, Richard
l his annual twenty marks, along with a like sum
ine. In January 1378 the poet, together with
ed the king's marriage with Mary of France;
ent to Lombardy on an embassy to Bernabò
an, and the renowned condottiere Sir John
in matters touching Richard's expedition
connexion with his brother-poet, John
ards dedicated his poem of *Troilus*
ent on this occasion—Gower being
ntatives, to appear for him if ne-
law during his absence abroad.
ly in 1379. In 1382 he was
ms in the port of London,
rly similar name; and in
heavier work of his
minate a permanent

deputy,—altho
ally, and not by
tically operative:

A singular and very obsc
of Chaucer pertains to the yea
year Cecilia Chaumpaigne—a lady
further distinctly—executed a deed of
language) relieving the poet from any proc
raptu meo"—or, as the words would ordinarily be tra
account of my ravishing." Is it then to be understoo
Chaucer had really "ravished" the fair Cecilia? or that he had
illegally abducted her, she being a ward or minor? Neither
supposition squares well with the facts. If Chaucer had trul
committed the heinous crime above suggested, that would ha
been a capital felony, and no legal instrument could have l
executed having the effect of compromising a felony.
had abducted a w or minor, the latter would have b
sonally disqualified for executing any legal deed whatev
at least it has hitherto been said; although we shou
look the possibility that Chaucer might have abdu
while a minor, and she, after attaining her majo
executed the deed. We must therefore set a
the first of these two interpretations of "*de*
glad, for Chaucer's credit, to do this, yo
his act to what might, under readily co
a very venial irregularity—the abdu
the poet really did remains problen
concluded either that he had ca
of full age, to marry her to a fri
of his marriage-vow, he had h
with Cecilia under circumsta
him some civil action, whi
consented to forego.

Returning now to t

her conspicuous distinction befalling him in 1386, but
h soon led to his greatest outward mishaps. He was
ne of the members for Kent in the Parliament which
October of that year. His political aims and personal
were bound up with those of the Duke of Lancaster,
Gaunt, one of the present king's uncles: but the in-
f this prince was now on the wane. He and his party
erse to the overgrown temporal power of the Church
ountry, and to any encroachments of papal authority:
e on the side of the reformer John Wiclif, or Wiclif
heirs. As to Chaucer himself, there is nothing to show
as in any distinct sense a Wiclifite: but his writings
undant evidence of his slighting estimate of monks
s, and of ecclesiastical pretenders and pretensions in
The Court was hostile to Wiclif, and the influence of
e of Gloucester, another of the king's uncles, was
pplanting that of Lancaster: Gloucester succeeded to
this same autumn. Though the precise details have
down to us, the result speaks forcibly enough for
persuades us that Chaucer, in his parliamentary and
or party demeanour, must have opposed and offended
and the Gloucester faction. In December 1386, only
hs after the meeting of Parliament, he was dismissed
offices in the Customs. His two pensions, however,
unrevoked, and were still received by himself up to
en, probably hard-pressed for ready money, he assigned
one John Scalby, who had most likely paid him their
Between these two dates, 1386 and 1388, it appears
lamity of another kind afflicted him: his wife died in

ay 1389 Chaucer got another chance of worldly pro-
but it proved a delusive one. His friends then returned
, among them the son of the Duke of Lancaster; and
he poet was made Clerk of the King's Works, com-

prising the Tower of London, the Palace at Westminster, and many other places and manors: his salary was two shillings a day, and he was permitted to act by deputy. He had also a separate appointment as Clerk of the Works at St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The Chapel was then ruinous, and ready to fall (the now existing Chapel is on a different site); and Chaucer seems to have done nothing for it during two years, beyond buying some stone for repairs, and paying for the unloading of this. Perhaps his remissness caused his discharge from the office—remissness aggravated by his having had the ill-luck, on the 3rd of September 1390, to lose £20 of the king's money, along with his horse and other belongings, by robberies committed by notorious thieves, partly at a spot designated as "the Foul Oak," near Hatcham in Surrey, and partly at Westminster. At any rate he *was* ousted from both his architectural employments in 1391, and, although Richard II. relieved him from the debt of £20, his monetary position relapsed into precariousness. He was undoubtedly in straits, and was badgered by law-suits; but the king, not wholly forgetting the ancient kindness with which so illustrious and fascinating a man had been regarded, exempted him from liability to arrest. And in February 1394 his distresses were once more relieved by a royal grant of £20 per annum for life. To this, in 1398, was added a tun of wine yearly. Generally speaking, it should be understood that Chaucer was decidedly a thriving man, according to the standard of those times. To say—as some have done—that his income corresponded to £1000 per annum is possibly excessive: but for many years his pensions, irrespective of his offices, equalled the then salary of the Chief Baron of the Exchequer, or the Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas.

The reign of Richard II.—weak, shifting, and unsettled, barren of foreign glory or of national well-being—was now drawing to a close: Henry of Lancaster, son of the lately

Duke, John of Gaunt, returned from exile, showed a bold front of remonstrance and resistance, and extinguished the tyranny of Richard like the snuff of a candle. Henry had only been four days on the throne when, on the 3rd of October 1399 he recognized the long-standing, and probably never-tarnished, attachment of Chaucer to his house by adding to the pension of £20 per annum granted by Richard another of £20 13s. 4d. I say "probably never tarnished," because, in some of the older biographies of the poet, a series of supposed facts is set down which, were we compelled to credit it, would materially diminish our respect for his firmness and consistency, and would show that he had little to expect from the justice, that he might have received from the pity and indulgence, of the head of his party when seated on his easily won but as yet uncertain strongly established throne. It has been said that Chaucer, in the most active period of his political life, got implicated in the manœuvres of the Wiclifite Comberton, or John Northampton, one of the competitors for the Lord-Mayoralty of London; that he was driven in consequence to take refuge in Cault, and afterwards in Zealand; and, on returning to England, was imprisoned in the Tower, whence he obtained his release only by making pusillanimous disclosures, compromising his confederates. All this used to be doubtful, and may now be safely pronounced a romance void of foundation. Chaucer, in his advanced age, honourable, honoured, and prosperous, was destined to enjoy but for a few months the well-earned favours of his new sovereign. At the close of his life he leased a house in Westminster, standing nearly on the site now occupied by Henry the Seventh's Chapel. Here on the 25th of October 1400 he died—aged, it would seem, hardly sixty, and not (as the older accounts ran) seventy-two. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, with fame great in his own age, and dwarfing, as the centuries pass, that of almost all the denizens of this gorgeous and venerable house of tombs.

The present monument of grey marble was erected many years after his death, in 1556, by Nicholas Brigham.

I have said as yet nothing about Chaucer's poems, but have only given details of the external events of his life, which are nevertheless, in comparison, of very slight importance to any of us at this time of day. The probable sequence of the poems is given thus by Mr. Furnivall, whose authority, founded upon diligent investigations and earnest zeal, may fairly be preferred to that of all previous British enquirers. Following Professor Bernhard Ten Brink, he divides Chaucer's poetic activity into three periods—1, preceding his Italian travels commenced in December 1372; 2, from his return in November 1373 up to 1384; and 3, his greatest power and ultimate decline. Premising this, and leaving out of count some minor works, we obtain the following results.

1st Period.—The *A. B. C.*, freely translated from Guillaume de Guilleville, being a prayer to the Virgin Mary, arranged in the order of the letters of the alphabet. 1366–68, the *Complaint to Pity*, which points, in tolerably clear language not lightly to be dismissed as other than substantially true, to an unreciprocated love which Chaucer nurtured during eight years for some lady whom it is not given to us to identify. 1369, the *Death of Blanche the Duchess*, first wife of John of Gaunt (sometimes called *The Dream of Chaucer*, but not to be confounded with another poem, *Chaucer's Dream, or the Isle of Ladies*, now rejected as spurious).

2nd Period.—1373, the *Life of Saint Cecile* (or *Second Nun's Tale* in the *Canterbury Tales*). 1374 or thereabouts, the *Parliament of Fowls; Complaint of Mars; Anelida and Arcite; Troilus and Cryseide.* 1384, the *House of Fame.*

3rd Period.—The *Legend of Good Women;* The *Canterbury Tales*—the central date of which may be towards 1386, while the entire work covers a number of his best years; *Flee fro the Press* (commonly termed *Good Counsel of Chaucer*,-to which is

on the legend that he wrote the lines on his deathbed).
om which year his gradual decline may be dated), the
nt of Venus, founded upon a French poem by Granson.
eptember, *Chaucer's Complaint to his Purse*, an appeal
y IV. for assistance.

s list it will be observed that several poems ordinarily
to Chaucer do not figure at all. Such are the *Testa-*
f Love, the *Lamentation of Mary Magdalene*, the
y of Ladies — all three now definitely rejected; also
koo and the Nightingale; the *Court of Love;* the
and the Leaf; the *Romaunt of the Rose*, translated
idged from the famous work of Guillaume de Loris
n de Méun, (for, though it is admitted that Chaucer
e *some* translation of this work, the particular version
among his poems is, by some critics, regarded as not
ly verified); the *Complaint of the Black Knight* (or
er's Life). The treatise on the *Astrolabe*, in prose, is
ly authentic; and as to the various poems last men-
uch controversy, based on valid considerations, still

er presents to us the perfection of the English lan-
der the transformation which, during the course of three-
years, it had undergone from association with the
and of English poetry under the long-standing influ-
romantic French models, and the now commencing
ion of this from Italian sources. Rhymed verse, it
e remarked, was already usual in Chaucer's time,
the *Piers Ploughman* is merely alliterative: he is con-
however, to have been the first who used the heroic
he rhymed decasyllabic couplets) in English, a metre
y in use in French and Italian. For absolute origin-
invention Chaucer does not stand high; he continually
his subjects and fables, takes the work of other men as
ing-point, and translates or paraphrases *ad libitum*. Yet

for originality of spirit he rises in the highest degree conspicuous; he introduces into poetry—not only English but European poetry—a breadth and variety in the pourtrayal of social life, a play of passion and emotion, a sweetness and richness of colouring, a genuine thorough humanity, which cannot be matched in any preceding author. He draws everything with the touch of a poet and a master, sings his perceptions into shape, and brightens his delineations with kindly and enjoying humour—the humour of a man who knows life in its multiform aspects, from observing it with mingled keenness and sympathy, and mixing in it personally. A charming freshness forms the atmosphere of all his work; he is perpetually new. The age of chivalry is obsolete, and the tongue with which he has expressed it archaic; but in his pages it is living and young to us for ever, and will continue to survive in every succeeding age, side by side with the aspects of the passing time, as long as Chaucer's poems themselves live, and of these dateless indeed is the appointed date.

Of course by far the greatest of Chaucer's works is the *Canterbury Tales*—a wellspring of pathos, pleasantry, and delight, a mine of character and social life. The most adequate because the largest and most inclusive criticism of this incomparable performance—the criticism which most fully expresses the essentials, and pauses least over the surface of it—is that given by another of our exalted poets, William Blake, who has written of it thus:—

"The characters of Chaucer's Pilgrims are the characters which compose all ages and nations. As one age falls, another rises, different to mortal eyes, but to immortals only the same; for we see the same characters repeated again and again, in animals, vegetables, minerals, and in men. Nothing new occurs in identical existence: Accident ever varies, Substance can never suffer change nor decay. Of Chaucer's characters as described in the *Canterbury Tales*, some of the names

re altered by time; but the characters themselves for main unaltered, and consequently they are the physiog- or lineaments of universal human life, beyond which never steps. Names alter; things never alter. I have multitudes of those who would have been monks in the monkery, who in this deistical age are deists.[1] As numbered the stars, and as Linnæus numbered the so Chaucer numbered the classes of men. . . . It is y here to speak of Chaucer's own character, that I may ain mistaken critics right in their conception of the and fun that occur on the journey. Chaucer is himself t poetical observer of men, who in every age is born to nd eternize its acts. This he does as a master, as a d superior, who looks down on their little follies, from eror to the miller; sometimes with severity, oftener e and sport. . . . Chaucer's characters live age after ery age is a Canterbury Pilgrimage: we all pass on, aining one or other of these characters, nor can a child who is not one of these characters of Chaucer. . . . er will observe that Chaucer makes every one of his s perfect in his kind; every one is an antique statue— of a class, and not of an imperfect individual."

anterbury Tales is an uncompleted work; its scheme operly include, not only the journey from the Tabard hwark, to Canterbury, but also the return-journey, and set of tales, told in the latter, should have supple-

observations correspond with considerable closeness to those of no, after doing Chaucer the sorry service of turning some of his the English of the time of William the Third, made up for this to a nt by his manly and enthusiastic prefatory eulogium. For instance: in the *Canterbury Tales*] our forefathers and great grand-dames , as they were in Chaucer's days. Their general characters are still a mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other those of monks and friars and canons and lady-abbesses and nuns; d is ever the same, and nothing lost out of Nature though every- ected."

mented those which belong to the former. It has been suggested that the connexion of these several stories by a general framework may have been suggested to Chaucer less by the *Decameron* of Boccaccio than by the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Peter Alfonsi, or the *Romance of the Seven Sages*—both works of popular repute in mediæval times.

Among the other poems of Chaucer—some of them marked by the easy and too monotonous fiction of a dream, indicating a certain sterility of invention as to form, admirable as was his moulding power in narrative and in detail—I may single out one—the *Troilus and Cryseide*—for a few additional remarks. This poem, lovely in sentiment, and with magical touches of character, is founded upon the *Filostrato* of Boccaccio, and is in fact, to a great extent, a direct and even a faithful translation of that poem, itself replete with excellence and flowing with facility. The *Filostrato* is written in the octave stanza, which Boccaccio is believed to have invented, and which afterwards became so famous in Italian literature in the hands of Ariosto and of Tasso (as in ours also in the *Don Juan* of Byron or the *Witch of Atlas* of Shelley): the *Troilus and Cryseide* is in a singularly beautiful seven-line stanza, known in French poetry before Chaucer's adoption of it. As to the substance of the *Filostrato*, Chaucer has so far added, curtailed, and modified that, on a close comparison, we find him to have taken from the Italian less than a third of the total of his own verses. He amplifies and moralizes—or, as one might say without disrespect, proses—far more than Boccaccio; and in especial his transmuting hand, and his highly original and acute sense of character, are to be traced in the personage of Pandarus, whom without departing greatly from his Italian original so far as incident and function are concerned, he essentially recreates. By this process he shifts the story from a quality partly romantic, partly licentious, and partly satirical, as in Boccaccio, to one in which narrative is more nearly allied to drama; cl

, high-flown passion, the many enticements of the streaked with sharp and living traits of character- And the character-painting of Chaucer is, in its way, various and abounding, hardly inferior to that of This mode of dealing with the *Filostrato* of may be taken as indicating generally the relation 's poems to those which he worked from and He used them freely, borrowing, translating, and re- under his hand they came out riper with meaning imately human.

of Chaucer, as they will always be famous and ere they exceedingly popular in and immediately time: the great number of MSS. attests this, and read beyond the insular limits of his own land, ntroduction of printing into England his works he first books that appeared in type. What is ificant of his greatness, he left no poetic successor ho could so much as tread in his steps, even *æquis*": the fifteenth and the early sixteenth lmost a blank in English, though partially com- me leading figures in Scottish, poetry.

of manhood Chaucer is said to have been of iful complexion, of middle height and graceful portrait was limned by Occleve from memory, him at an advanced age, with a forked grey -coloured dress and hood; a black case, con- or writing materials, is in his vest, his right hand n his left a string of beads. The eyes are well full; the countenance (supposing the expression irly well caught in this unpretending but seemly at once grave and debonair—the countenance of ged experience, thoughtful and lenient, chastened, by the furrowing hand of Time. The portly Host *bury Tales* is made to address Chaucer in the s, supplying some hints as to his demeanour:—

"And than at erst he lookèd upon me,
And saide thus: 'What man art thou?' quod he.
'Thou lookest as thou wouldest find an hare,
For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.
Approache near, and looke merrily.
He in the waist is shape as well as I:
This were a popet in an arm to embrace
For any woman small and fair of face!
He seemeth elvish by his countenance,
For unto no wight doth he dalliance.'"

The reference here to the poet's abstracted air is confirmed the *House of Fame*, where he speaks of himself as sitting at book till his look becomes dazed.

It has been said that the great-grandson of this illustri poet came near to succeeding to the crown of England. T is made out by representing that his surviving son, Thon Speaker of the Commons in 1414, who married the daug and coheiress of Sir John Burghersh, and became a mar large property, left a daughter, Alice, who married as her secc husband the Duke of Suffolk, the same who was attainted a extrajudicially beheaded in 1450. Her eldest son married Princess Elizabeth, sister of Edward IV.; and his son, the Ear Lincoln, nephew of Richard III., was declared by the la heir apparent to the throne in the event of the death of his son without issue. This event ensued; but the Earl of Lin was of course set aside by the conquest and accession of H VII. But a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. the weakest link is the first—the assumption, namely, Thomas Chaucer was son to the poet Geoffrey Chaucer one really knows that he was so, or can prove that he and in default of any such evidence we are bound miss this diverting figment, and to abide in the convicti Chaucer was the sovereign of English poesy in his ov and for some two centuries following, and not to be ever dethroned, but was not the great-grandfather of a sovereign of the English body-politic.

POETS BORN BETWEEN CHAUCER AND SPENSER.

JOHN LYDGATE	from *c.* 1370 to *c.* 1450.
JAMES I. of Scotland	from 1394 to 1437.
THOMAS OCCLEVE (or HOCCLEVE)	wrote *c.* 1420.
ROBERT HENRYSON	from *c.* 1425 to *c.* 1500.
HENRY THE MINSTREL (BLIND HARRY)	wrote *c.* 1475.
WILLIAM DUNBAR.....	from *c.* 1465 to *c.* 1530.
JOHN SKELTON	from 1469 to 1529.
GAWIN DOUGLAS	from 1475 to 1521 or 1522.
ALEXANDER BARKLAY	died in 1552.
SIR DAVID LINDSAY.....	from 1490 to *c.* 1557.
JOHN BALE	from 1495 to 1563.
SIR THOMAS WYATT.....	from 1503 to 1542.
NICHOLAS UDALL	wrote *c.* 1532 to 1564.
EARL OF SURREY	from *c.* 1517 to 1547.
THOMAS SACKVILLE LORD BUCKHURST	from *c.* 1530 or 1536 to 1608.

EDMUND SPENSER.

of our great English poets, Spenser, is a some-
scure figure to us personally than the first of them,
f Chaucer as a man we all entertain a definite,
nearly the same, conception, founded mainly on
he was the author of the *Canterbury Tales;* for
hat book must infallibly have been gifted with a
vation, of humour, of enjoyment, of sympathy, of
th a warm-blooded and full-bodied sense of life,
experience of it, which furnish us with a very
le, and individual Chaucer, as the producer of
ut Spenser, as the author of the *Faery Queen*, is
equally real to us—he does not become to us
. We find in this, and subordinately in his
mind of uncommon exaltation, with great con-
-consistency, and an earnest love of virtue and
and we surmise a character to correspond — a
ed more sustained and more untarnished than
But after all we remain in the region of supposi-
not strongly identify Spenser, though we appre-
nour him. His poems are far less real to us than
and himself less real than his poems. Of the facts
however, we know fully as much as of the elder
such facts as have come down to us are mostly of
kind for the outer record, though not equally so

for the inner biography, connecting Spenser as they do the public events of his time. While we cannot doubt he was, by nature as well as by position, a man of the rather than of action, we find him nevertheless, during th great majority of his adult career, intermixing capably and vigorously in the nation's work.

The earlier period of Edmund Spenser's life is the most uncertain. Hitherto it had not been exactly settled what family he belonged to—perhaps to a Lancashire branch of the ennobled race of Spenser. It seemed, and still seems, a fair presumption that he was connected with Sir John Spenser; whose two daughters, Anne and Elizabeth, who married L Mounteagle and Lord Hunsdon, he addressed some poe Now at last it is definitely affirmed[1] that both his parents be proved to have been Lancashire people. He was b London, perhaps in East Smithfield near the Tower. his monument in Westminster Abbey the date of bir as 1510: but this is beyond doubt extravagantly ur the other hand, the ordinarily accepted date, 1553, be some years too late. He was a "poor scholar" chant Tailors' School, London; thence, on the 20th 1569, he entered as a poor scholar or sizar in Pembroke Cambridge; taking his degree as B.A. in 1572, and as in 1576. He tried for a fellowship, but failed; and t success, combined with narrow circumstances, is belie have been his motive for leaving the University. H retired for some while to the North of England, and there with friends, without adopting, and it might seem being minded to adopt, any sort of profession. One con is that he lived with his own parents at Burnley in La the parents being, according to this theory, Edmund and Spenser, residents in that town. During this northern s

[1] By the Rev. A. B. Grosart, who has projected a new edition of Spe

[illegible] to traditionary guesswork, he fell in love with the lady whom he has celebrated under the name of Rosalind, complained, in the *Shepherd's Calendar*, of her cruelty, indifference, and those other vices of maidenly virtue which poets and poetasters equally spin off into such a superfetation of verse. On this subject we can say nothing precise: there may have been a Rosalind, and she may have been as like the Rosalind of the poems as the undefined nature of that portraiture permits, and Spenser may have been in love with her, or minded to represent himself as in love; but, if a negative answer to these surmises would be rash, an affirmative is also insecure. At any rate, with respect to Rosalind, we do not know who she was, nor even whether she was. Another of the personages of the same poem is properly identified—Hobbinol, who stands for the poet's friend Gabriel Harvey. It is probable that Spenser wrote in the north most of the *Shepherd's Calendar*: it was published in London in 1579. This work, the most antiquated in style among all his writings, is much concerned with political or party divinity under a pastoral exterior, and is in the tone which is known by the term "puritanical": it obtained a large share of popularity.

The *Shepherd's Calendar* was not, however, the first of Spenser's poems, nor indeed of his publications. The year 1569 is the earliest landmark both of his literary and of his personal career. In that year were included in Vander Noodt's *Theatre of Worldlings* some sonnets translated from Petrarch, which were afterwards reissued as the performance of Spenser; and in that year also, under the date of 18 October, a payment is recorded to "Edmund Spenser" who had brought over letters from the English Ambassador in France. This, as we have seen, is the same year when he entered Cambridge University, and when, according to the ordinarily received date of his birth, he was but sixteen years of age; a period of life more consistent with the dabbling in Petrarch than with the

carriage of ambassadorial despatches. We are left to guess whether the Edmund Spenser who returned from France was the same person as the Cambridge sizar; and, if so, whether we must not finally reject 1553 as the date of birth. Another of his early essays in writing was a series of no less than nine comedies—a highly remarkable enterprise for that epoch of our literature: of these no record now remains.

At the beginning of August 1580, on the appointment of Arthur Lord Grey of Wilton as Lord Deputy of Ireland, Spenser accompanied that nobleman thither as his secretary. That he could and did work under him with satisfaction is evident from an interesting passage in his *'View of the State of Ireland,* written in the form of dialogue after Lord Grey had been recalled, and had died. Here Irenæus (representing Spenser himself) is made to say:—"In the mean time, all that was formerly done, with long labour and great toil, was, as you say, in a moment undone, and that good lord blotted with the name of a bloody man, whom who that well knew knew to be most gentle, affable, loving, and temperate, but that the necessity of that present state of things enforced him to that violence and almost changed his natural disposition. But otherwise he was so far from delighting in blood that oftentimes he suffered not just vengeance to fall where it was deserved; and did some of them which were afterwards his accusers had tasted so much of his mercy, and were from the gallows brought to be his accusers. But his course indeed was this—that he spared not the heads and principals of any mischievous practices and rebellion, but showed sharp judgment on them, chiefly for ensample sake that all the meaner sort, which also were generally then infected with that evil, might, by terror thereof, be reclaimed and saved if it were possible." To this and other observations of Irenæus the other speaker Eudoxus replies: "He was always known to be a most just, sincere, godly, and right noble man, far from such sternness, far from such unrighteousness. But, in the

rp execution of the Spaniards at the Fort of Smerwick, I ard it specially noted; and, if it were true (as some reported), ly it was a great touch to him in honour,—for some say that promised them life,—others, at least he did put them in e thereof." And Irenæus replies, giving us an important pse into Spenser's own Irish experiences, which here, and doubt in many another instance, were far different from the eful cabinet-duties which one mostly associates with the he of secretary:—"Both the one and the other is most rue; for this I can assure you, *myself being as near them as* , that he was so far either from promising or putting them in e that first their secretary (called, as I remember, Signor frey, an Italian), being sent to treat with the Lord Deputy grace, was flatly refused. And afterwards their colonel, ned Don Sebastian, came forth to entreat that they might t with their arms like soldiers, at least with their lives, ording to the custom of war and law of nations. It was ngly denied him, and told him by the Lord Deputy himself hey could not justly plead either custom of war or law of s, for that they were not any lawful enemies; and, if they he willed them to show by what commission they came r into another prince's dominions to war, whether from ope, or the King of Spain, or any other. The which when said they had not, but were only adventurers that came to fortune abroad, and to serve in wars amongst the Irish lesired to entertain them, it was then told them that the themselves—as the Earl, and John of Desmond, with the were no lawful enemies, but rebels and traitors, and fore they that came to succour them no better than s and runagates, specially coming with no license nor ission from their own king, so as it should be dishonour- for him, in the name of the Queen, to condition or make erms with such rascals; but left them to their choice to l and submit themselves or no. Whereupon the said

colonel did absolutely yield himself and the fort, with
therein, and craved only mercy; which it being not thou
good to show them (for danger of them if, being saved,
should afterward join with the Irish—and also for terror t
Irish, who are much emboldened by those foreign succours
also put in hope of more ere long), there was no way b
make that short end of them as *was* made. Therefore
untruly and maliciously do these evil tongues backbite
slander the sacred ashes of that most just and honourable
sonage, whose least virtue, of many most excellent that abou
in his heroic spirit, they were never able to aspire unto."

In March 1581 Spenser received another appointment,
of Clerk in the Irish Court of Chancery. This lasted b
short while: Lord Grey being recalled in 1582, Spenser, t
appearance, returned with him to England, and nothin
known of him for three or four years ensuing. He and
patrons however still kept an eye on Ireland. On the 27t
July 1586 Spenser obtained from the Crown a grant of a
three-thousand acres of forfeited land in that country, a p
of the former domain of the Earl of Desmond, in the
of Cork: perhaps his chief friend Sir Philip Sidney (wh
in October of this same year, and who was well second
his relative the Earl of Leicester in his zeal for Spenser
have been foremost in procuring him this advantage. S
then went back to Ireland, and lived in the mansion whi
been the Earl of Desmond's Castle of Kilcolman, near
amid scenery of uncommon beauty; in 1588 he was ap
Clerk to the Council of Munster. Here he remained till
when he once more came over to England, and publish
London the first three books of the *Faery Queen*, a poem
he had begun towards 1579—the same date (as we have a
seen) as that of the publication of the *Shepherd's Calend*

There are two amusing anecdotes of Spenser's litera
which, though probably apocryphal, may nevertheless f

e here, and be read for what they are worth. The first y is that the poet, when he revisited London from the th of England, in 1579, introduced himself to Sidney, pre- ng to him the ninth Canto of the First Book of the *Faery n*, containing the renowned description of the Cave of pair. Sidney, admiring (as he well might do) the first za that he read, ordered Spenser a gratuity of £50, and, ing another stanza, another £50. At the third stanza, he ed the total to £200, and he enjoined his steward to pay money down at once, lest in the sequel he should be pted to give away his whole estate.—The second story is t Queen Elizabeth on one occasion, upon receiving some ems from Spenser, ordered him £100. The minister Lord rghley exclaimed in dismay, "What! all this for a song?" zabeth rejoined, "Then give him what is reason." No ney however reached the itching palm of Spenser; who at gth adventured to remind his royal mistress of her promised nty, by addressing to her the following quatrain (quoted in lowe's Diary, which is dated 1602) :—

> "It pleased your Grace upon a time
> To grant me reason for my rhyme:
> But from that time until this season
> I heard of neither rhyme nor reason."

brought the matter to a head: Elizabeth reproved the ing Burghley, and once more awarded to Spenser the nal £100. Some colour is lent to this latter anecdote by authenticated fact that Spenser had a great antipathy to hley. His poem named *Prosopopœia, or Mother Hubbard's* , contains many severe causticities directed, according to general consent of commentators, against that potent ster. This apologue was published with other poems after appearance of the first part of the *Faery Queen*, but had, rant to his own account, been written "in the raw con- of my youth"—a statement which may possibly have been

merely a device to smooth matters down, although in all l
hood the date of the work is really anterior to the gra
land in Ireland. As to Queen Elizabeth, it would not a
that Spenser had any *personal* acquaintance with his sov
until he was preparing to publish the *Faery Queen:* Rale
is said, then introduced him to her, and was urgent fo
publication, and Elizabeth accepted the dedication of the
In February 1591 she granted Spenser a pension of £5
annum, and the title of Poet Laureate.

The *Faery Queen* gave its author a high degree of celeb
The publisher then collected together the poet's previous c
positions, under the name of *Complaints, containing sun
small Poems of the World's Vanity.* This comprises (bes
Mother Hubbard's Tale already mentioned) the *Ruin
Time*, the *Tears of the Muses*, and other verses, among wh
are all those that had been previously published—nam
the *Shepherd's Calendar*, and (it would seem) the poem, of
to five hundred lines, named *Muiopotmos, or the Fate of
Butterfly.* Many others had been written, but could n
recovered for this publication. Spenser probably remain
England till the beginning of 1592: he then brought o
elegy entitled *Daphnaida*, and next returned to Ireland.
probably composed in 1592–93 the eighty-eight sonnets de
ing his courtship of the lady whom he afterwards ma
this fair one, named Elizabeth, was traditionally repu
have been a peasant-girl, but she is now known to have
a gentlewoman, equal in station to Spenser himself. O
the most splendid of his compositions, the *Epithalam
celebrates his own wedding. In 1595 he published
Clout's come home again (the ugly name of Colin Clou
well as the slightly more genial one of "Young Cuddy.
signating himself); also *Astrophel*, an elegy on his well-l
and honoured Sir Philip Sidney, and the *Mourning Mu
Thestylis*, on the same theme: and ere the year closed

l likewise his *Amoretti*—the sonnets and epithalamium entioned. In 1596 he came over to England, bringing with ooks IV., V., and VI., of the *Faery Queen;* these, with a of the three preceding books, were published. This llowed in the same year by a reprint of *Daphnaida*, with the *Prothalamion*, and the four Hymns of *Love*, *Heavenly Love*, and *Heavenly Beauty:* the two former s being notified as composed "in the greener time of uth," and many copies of them "formerly scattered ." It is likely that he now wrote, and presented to Elizabeth, his important treatise (from which we have quoted) *A View of the State of Ireland;* a work which ill be read with much interest, on historical as well as grounds, and which is not unimbued with a solid sense ce and equitable consideration for the Irish population, gh its main thesis is the necessity for quelling, by ign authority and unresting force, all demonstrations of , sedition, or disaffection. Spenser shows in this work per of a statesmanly official, with breadth of mind for ing the subject generally, and an active mastery and nipulation of ways and means: there is nothing in it practical dreamer, or the vaguely discursive smatterer. ise remained unpublished until 1633.

probably at an early date in 1597 that Spenser re- r the last time to Ireland: in the following year he mended by Elizabeth for the office of Sheriff of Cork. r the breaking-out of Tyrone's rebellion, in October house at Kilcolman was attacked and burned by the d one child perished in the conflagration. The poet, wife and two surviving sons, escaped with difficulty, ed in England destitute. Ben Jonson gave the follow- nt of this woeful catastrophe to Drummond of Haw- : "The Irish having robbed Spenser's goods, and s house and a little child newborn, he and his wife

escaped; and after he died for lack of bread in King S
and refused twenty pieces sent to him by my Lord of E
adding, He was sorry he had no time to spend them." T
probability is however that Spenser died, not of actual
tion or destitution, but worn-out with the hardships and
tions of the terrible days he had just passed through. A
certain period of illness, his death took place at a hous
King Street, Westminster, on the 13th of January 1599.
own request was that he might be buried in Westminster A
hard by Chaucer. This was done at the charge of Lord
with a Latin inscription which spoke of him as "*Anglic*
poetarum nostri sæculi facile princeps." Thirty years after
the Countess of Dorset erected the existing monument
the inscription is in English, and follows the original le
terming Spenser "the prince of poets in his time." The a
left two sons, Sylvanus and Peregrine. The son of the
named Hugolin, was restored by Charles II. to the Irish e
of his grandfather; but, adhering at a later date to Jame
he was outlawed, and the lands reverted to the Crown.
were afterwards conferred upon another scion of the
named William Spenser.

The poet, at his death, left behind him two cant
additional book of the *Faery Queen*, and two stanzas o
canto. These have been published, and it is doubtful
much more had ever been written. He is said to ha
posed also a prose treatise named the *English Poet*, bu
no trace appears.

There are two very diverse portraits extant, each
has been said to represent Edmund Spenser. One,
generally recognized as genuine, shows a long face, wit
sized straight nose, brown eyes, short curling hair, a fu
tache, and close-clipped beard; a thoughtful and rat
dened face, corresponding to what we understand his n
have been—reserved and gentle. The other portrait

ly have been taken from the same original: it is a gnomy altogether keener—more active, bustling, and ane. The poet was no doubt not wanting in a certain le self-opinion, discernible *passim* in his writings of the lary rank; this was tempered by an earnest sense of ide, and by a religious habit of mind which, as was natural loyal Englishman of those days, took a strong tinge of Catholicism. He was a man of most extensive knowledge, r of all the learning of his age. Founding his poetical hiefly on Italian models, he greatly confirmed, if he did initiate, the pastoral mode in English verse. He was in metrical refinements, and made the great invention ntinues to be named from him the Spenserian stanza—, majestic, gathering and refluent like the waves of a and musical sea. Intentionally archaic in his diction, ened the stature of English as a poetic language, and o a pitch of exaltation which had not previously been ed, and has hardly since been rivalled by the few mongst his successors.

are considerable differences of degree in the excellence er's compositions; but, broadly speaking, whatever he the authentic poetic stamp, and can be read as a choice shed example of its kind. The *Faery Queen*, on which e need dwell in concluding, is an unmatched and unique or a quality which might be defined under the name gorgeousness"; the sphere and substance of the poem onstantly moral, its forms are all imaginative and sump- an embattled cloudland lit by the most transfiguring the rising and the setting sun. The splendours which le and subserve passion in other writers are marshalled nser into the train of ethics. Hence comes the fascina- d also, it may be allowed, much of the fatiguing effect, nser's gracious and grand creation; we feel that the are coerced into the service of the end rather than

natively germane to that: they are made by the ma
hand to grow into it, instead of growing out of it in na
and spontaneous development. They form an alien th
magnificent grafting, not a free efflorescence. We need
dwell further on this side of the question. Among very
poems, the *Divina Commedia* of Dante and the *Faery Que*
Spenser stand alone in taking as their direct theme mor
spiritual virtue, to be exhibited, enforced, and illustra
Dante supplied his own designation as the Poet of Rectit
The Florentine developed his theme with all resources
sublime, the stupendous, the awful, with the mysteries o
loveliness and the pangs of human pathos. The Eng
works out his subject with the allurements of romance;
adventure, beauty, noble and gloomy imagery, are the n
of his will. As we read, we clearly appreciate his cer
tention, and can estimate his scheme as a formative wh
the romance it is that from first to last usurps upon us,
separate episodes usurp upon the entire romance.

Spenser himself, in a letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, s
the purport of the *Faery Queen*, which is, he tells us,
tinued allegory or dark conceit." He says—(I conden
siderably)—"The general end of all the book is to fas
gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle disci
which for that I conceived should be most plausible and
ing being coloured with an historical fiction, I chose the h
of King Arthur. I labour to pourtraict in Arthur, befo
was king, the image of a brave knight perfected in the
private moral virtues, as Aristotle hath devised; the wh
the purpose of these first twelve Books. Which if I find
well accepted, I may be perhaps encouraged to fram
other part of politic virtues in his person after that he came
king. Arthur I conceive to have seen in a dream or visio
Faery Queen; with whose excellent beauty ravished, he
ing resolved to seek her out. In that Faery Queen I

in my general intention; but, in my particular, I conceive
ost excellent and glorious person of our sovereign the
n,—and her kingdom, in Faery-land. And yet, in some parts
I do otherwise shadow her; for, considering she beareth
ersons—the one of a most royal queen or empress, the
of a most virtuous lady—this latter part, in some places,
ress in Belphœbe. So, in the person of Prince Arthur,
rth Magnificence in particular; which virtue for that
ng to Aristotle and the rest) it is the perfection of all
and containeth in it them all, therefore in the whole
mention the deeds of Arthur appliable to that virtue
write of in that Book. But of the twelve other virtues
twelve other knights the patrons, for the more variety
story; of which these three Books contain three. The
he Knight of the Red Cross, in whom I express Holi-
second, of Sir Guyon, in whom I set forth Temperance;
, of Britomartis a lady-knight, in whom I picture
The method of a poet historical is not such as of an
pher. The beginning of my history, if it were to be
n historiographer, should be the twelfth Book, which
st; where I devise that the Faery Queen kept her
east twelve days; upon which twelve several days the
s of the twelve several adventures happened which,
ndertaken by twelve several knights, are in these twelve
verally handled and discoursed."

in Spenser's own mind, were the plan and purport of
poetical work which remains to all time a model of the
of imaginative and inventive narration, and of the
s of verse.

POETS BORN BETWEEN SPENSER AND SHAKESP

Sir Walter Raleigh	1552 to 1618.
George Peele	*c.* 1552 to 1598.
John Lyly	1553 or 1554 to ear in the 17*th* century.
Sir Philip Sidney	1554 to 1586.
Fulke Greville Lord Brooke	1554 to 1628.
George Chapman	1557 to 1634.
Sir John Harington	*c.* 1561 to 1612.
Samuel Daniel	1562 to 1619.
Joshua Sylvester	1563 to 1618.
Michael Drayton	*1563 to 1631.*
Christopher Marlow	*c.* 1565 to 1593.
Sir Henry Wotton	1568 to 1639.
Edward Fairfax	died *c.* 1632.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

hall be said about Shakespeare? What shall *not* be
low could one adequately express the sense of his
? How word anything on this subject which has not
rded, and better worded, before? The mind bows
fore this supreme embodiment of human intellect and
niversality of human character, and confesses its incom-
to estimate him, or to express even such estimate as it
n to forming. Analysis has long been exhausted, and
long with that: enthusiasm and reverence remain; but
s in which they could be imparted show colourless and
und thin and hollow. I shall attempt little beyond
rizing the known or presumed facts of Shakespeare's
d then supplying in translation a few of the things which
en greatly said about him—said by the foremost poet
epoch, Victor Hugo; whose book on the mightiest of
ists is little known to English readers, and has somehow
mostly supposed in this country to be worthy rather of
than study.

iam Shakespeare came of a family of decent credit on
ternal side, and on the maternal of some dignity and
n. John Shakespeare, his father, was son of a substantial
r at Snitterfield, a village three or four miles distant from
rd-on-Avon in Warwickshire. Mary Arden, the poet's
r, was grand-niece to a gentleman who had been Groom
Chamber to Henry VII., and who was a brother of Sir

John Arden: this family was connected with that which
duced the Hampden so famous in the time of Char
Mary's father was an opulent yeoman at Wilmecote, a
herself heiress to a small farm named Ashbies; she
John Shakespeare presumably about 1557. The latte
1551, had opened a shop in Henley Street, Stratford,
sale of gloves, and probably of meat, wool, and barle
prospered, and bought two small copyhold properties;
a burgess and an alderman of the town—which may at
have numbered some twelve-hundred inhabitants—
other local offices. He was not only an ordinary
but in 1568, four years after the poet's birth, bailif
magistrate of Stratford, and in September 1571 chief a
this clearly stamps him as a person of eminent cred
locality, or, as we should now say, of "the highest
ability." A grant of arms was made to him in 1569,
firmed in 1599. The instrument of confirmation re
the great grandfather of John Shakespeare had been r
with lands and tenements for services rendered to He
Thus we see that, both on the father's and on the
side, the dramatist had special reasons for bearing
Tudor sovereign in loyal memory; and his play of
III. indicates that so he did.

It is universally, and we may say correctly, assumed
that world-famous house in Henley Street the poet was
April 1564. The day of his baptism was the 26th o
month. The exact natal day is fixed at the 23rd, St. G
Day, by the tradition (supposing it to be true) that he c
the very anniversary of his birth. There were seven
children of the marriage, two of them preceding and
before the birth of William; four younger ones, three bo
named Gilbert, Richard, and Edmund, and a sister Joan
up. Edmund, who died in 1607, became, like Shake
himself, an actor in London. Joan married a Mr. Hart

e Hart family the house in Henley Street continued to
p to 1806. William was probably sent at an early age
e School of Stratford: it is to be presumed that he
d the rudiments of Latin, but not any Greek. He
have left school prematurely, owing to the narrowing
nces of his father; who in 1578 had to mortgage the
Ashbies, and can in other respects be traced to have
What Shakespeare did upon leaving school is matter
ure, or at best of obscure tradition. Aubrey retails a
icating that he was apprenticed to a butcher, or perhaps
s own father in the butchering branch (if such existed)
paternal business. "When he killed a calf," says
"he would do it in a high style, and make a speech;"
which was indeed easy to invent, but which is also not
rly difficult to believe. Another story, also from
is that he acted as a country schoolmaster; a third
ion—founded on the intimate acquaintance with legal
pparent in so many of his writings—that he entered a
s office.

his nineteenth year Shakespeare married; and the facts
t that the bride-elect had been liberal of her favours to
y-wooer in anticipation of the nuptial ceremony. The
l, about eight years his senior, was Anne, daughter of
rd Hathaway, a well-to-do yeoman at Shottery, a village
t about a mile or so from Stratford. There was only one
g of the banns of marriage, instead of the prescribed and
mary three; and, to save the licensing bishop and his
rs harmless for such an irregularity and against other
ngencies, two friends of the Hathaways, Fulk Sandells
John Richardson, had to enter beforehand into a bond,
l 28 November 1582, taking all the responsibility on
selves. The wedding ensued; and only about six months
after, on the 26th of May 1583, the firstborn child,
nna, was baptized. It should be understood that Anne

Hathaway's indiscretion, if any there was, was not a very one according to the standard of those times, for betr precontract carried the privileges of marriage; in legitimize the offspring, however, actual preceding was requisite.

At Charlecote, in the neighbourhood of Stratford, magistrate, Sir Thomas Lucy, who for various reason no means in good odour with the townsmen. Thei park at Charlecote, and therefore many modern scruti well-worn old stories say there were not any deer; nev it is possible that there were deer although there wa park. It is highly conceivable that the ruffling bo panions and mounting young spirits of Stratford thought sort of thing to harass the public enemy Sir Thomas means they could, and among others by appropriat deer, if any existed—an act which should rather be r under the circumstances as retaliatory poaching t strictly criminal deer-stealing. And it is equally possib Shakespeare may have borne his part in expeditions kind. No proof to any such effect is, or ever has adduced; but an old and constant tradition purports t stole deer from Sir Thomas Lucy, and was prosecuted doing. The tradition does not add that he was conv nor, if convicted, what his sentence was—the offence trespass, and the maximum punishment, even for deer-st in a park, would have been limited to three months' imp ment and triple damages. One infers rather that the prose lapsed in consequence of his decamping—for that is the essential part of the whole tale: Shakespeare "made hi scarce," and came up to London, and many a thing en which otherwise might not have ensued. The tale s credible enough; to be accepted or not "as you like Shakespeare is said to have finished-off this adventure by ing, and affixing to the gate of Charlecote, the follo abusive stave on Sir Thomas Lucy:—

'A parliament-member, a justice of peace,
At home a poor scarecrow, at London an ass:
If 'lousy' is 'lucy' (as some volk miscall it),
Then Lucy is lousy, whatever befall it.
He thinks himself great;
Yet an ass in his state
We allow by his ears but with asses to mate.
If 'lucy' is 'lousy' (as some volk miscall it),
Sing lousy Lucy, whatever befall it."[1]

ming peccadillo may or may not be Shakespeare's; ot say for certain. Along with it, as bearing on the stion of the deer-stealing, we have to take count of ene in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. Here Justice ccuses Falstaff of having "beaten my men, *killed my* broken open my lodge"; and he and his ancestors by his Cousin Slender to have "the dozen white *luces* oat" [coat of arms], and the parson Sir Hugh Evans blunders upon this observation, "The dozen white become an old coat well." The luce (pike-fish or the crest of the Lucy family.—A different motive for Shakespeare's going to London is the decrease of r's means, and the necessity for doing what he could own growing family: two twins, Hamnet and Judith, ceeded Susanna, and had been christened in February These however were in fact the last of his children, to earance.

v did Shakespeare fare in London? It is certain that at time, perhaps in 1586, he became an actor in Lord e's (afterwards the Lord Chamberlain's) company at one two theatres in Shoreditch; but whether this was his employment is questioned. A member of an Inn of , writing about 1693, says that Shakespeare was originally ved into the playhouse as a "servitor"; and the story that he used to hold the horses of the gentlemen who

[1] o other verses of this ballad have been given; they are probably forgeries etwood.

came to see the performances, and that he got n
expertness in his humble vocation. Leaving this
preliminary, we behold William Shakespeare initiat
immortality by the fact of his becoming an acto
companies of players had visited Stratford in his boy
had possibly excited in him some emulous longings
tudes—and by his being thus put in the way, not only
but also of revising and re-adapting plays written
authors, and hence in the sequel undertaking plays of
how different from all that had preceded, and how
over all, even if we look only to his earliest original pr
the world has sufficiently found out.—I will divide Sha
London career into three sections, and consider hir
the Actor; 2nd, as the Author; 3rd, as the Man.

1. *Shakespeare the Actor.* There is a famous passa
will be quoted further on) in the work which Robe
wrote on his deathbed in 1592, *A Groatsworth*
attacking Shakespeare savagely; this work was edited
Chettle, stationer (*i.e.* printer or compositor) and p
who a few months afterwards apologized for the at
averred Shakespeare to be "excellent" in his vocatio
though there is nothing to show that he ever made
sensation as an actor, we may reasonably assume that
a creditable, and even a distinguished, member of his co
It is said that he played the part of a king in various piec
some part or other in Ben Jonson's *Sejanus*, and (among
characters) the Ghost in *Hamlet*. Whether he played t
like "an oyster-wife" would be matter of opinion. T
Lodge was entitled to *his* opinion, and he, in his *Wit's M*
dated 1596, has a funny passage applicable to *some* act
the Ghost, possibly (though this is the merest conjecture) S
speare: "He [the fiend Hate-Virtue] looks as pale as
visard of the Ghost which cried so miserably at the Theatre
an oyster-wife, 'Hamlet, revenge!'" The facts of Shakespe

connexion with the Blackfriars Theatre, and after-
he Globe (or Bankside) Theatre, have been involved
n by definite mis-statements, worse than a free
ple uncertainty; it has been said, for instance,
es out of number, that he was a sharer in the
tre as early as 1589, and concurred in the
obe. The contrary is apparent from documents
ed, and seemingly unimpugnable. Richard
came the most celebrated actor of the time)
, Cuthbert Burbage, built the Globe Theatre
placed Shakespeare in the theatre, and made
others partners in the profits of "the House"
term which may at that time have designated the
t the doors, and perhaps something more. At a
ter certainly than May 1603, when James I. came
ne—the Burbages re-entered upon the Blackfriars
ich had been built by their father years before the
here also they placed Shakespeare and other actors.
en he left the stage is not certainly known: "after
to be the date assigned, but it is now clear that
nt must have been some considerable while after
h, as we have just seen, is the year when he was
(or retransferred) to the Blackfriars boards. Mani-
did not wholly like his occupation. He felt that it
im in the eyes of others; perhaps too even in his
Shakespeare, it may be abundantly inferred from his
lways accounted himself a gentleman by birth and
and the associates of his choice were gentlemen.
e following passages from his sonnets (110, 111):—

"Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view.
* * * *
Oh for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.

Thence comes it that my name receives a brand ;
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.
Pity me then, and wish I were renewed.'

2. *Shakespeare the Author.* If we except the
dubiously ascribed to his youth, before he ca
the verses on Sir Thomas Lucy, and a still m
rain ridiculing the neighbouring villages where
we know of nothing written by Shakespeare
than 1593 and 1594, at which dates he must h
twenty-eight and twenty-nine years of age. I
lished his poem of *Venus and Adonis;* which, in
addressed to Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southan
"the first heir of my invention" (some critics
have been written years before): and in 1594
Lucrece, dedicated to the same nobleman. The
tained a warm friendship for Shakespeare: o
(which greatly needs verification however) is that
one occasion gave the actor £1000. *Venus and*
an impression, running rapidly through several e
seventh (or perhaps sixth) appeared in 1602. Th
the greatest dramatist of the world first wrote a play
fixed; but it must have been not later at any rate
when the texts of his *Richard II.*, *Richard III.*, and
Julict, were published. He himself had nothing
to do with the publication in this instance, or in th
of any other of his plays whatsoever: he wrote for
acted in his own plays, pleased the audience as dra
player, distanced all writing competitors in this form
favour, excited little notice and less enthusiasm amc

[1] Here are the verses :—

"Piping Pebworth, dancing Marston,
Haunted Hillborough, and hungry Grafton,
With dodging Exhall, papist Wixford,
Beggarly Broom, and drunken Bidford."

v his own worth, and (seemingly with the most ference) abandoned his poetic offspring to their s he had gone to the cuckoo's school for policy, sure that the eggs deposited by the cuckoo in st would he hatched, if not by itself, by the ns none the less astonishing to all lovers of rtist as Shakespeare should have tolerated harumscarum mode of publication of his one he lived to see effected. In 1598 were *Labour's Lost*, and *Henry IV.*, Part I.; in 1600 *t's Dream*, the *Merchant of Venice*, *Henry IV.*, *V.*, *Much Ado about Nothing*, and (in a second *Andronicus*;[1] in 1602 the *Merry Wives of* 603 *Hamlet*, an unauthorized edition, followed more correct one; in 1608 *King Lear*; in 1609 *ressida*, and *Pericles*. Moreover before 1598, *tlemen of Verona*, the *Comedy of Errors*, *Love's* (which is probably identical with *All's Well that* nd *King John*, had been produced on the stage. ays, not distinctly accounted for as to year of first representation, are *As You Like It* (towards *ius Cæsar* and *Twelfth Night* (towards 1602), *Measure* and *Othello* (towards 1604), *Macbeth* 10), *Winter's Tale* (towards 1611), the *Taming of Henry VI.*,[2] *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Timon of Athens*, *Cymbeline*, *Henry VIII.*, and *The Tempest*. The play, or else the *Winter's Tale*, is generally regarded t of all in date. Then there are the sonnets pub- *Passionate Pilgrim* in 1599, and the general body

nder this title, not then ascribed to Shakespeare, was entered at in 1593.

d III. of *Henry VI.*, in their original form, which was probably f Shakespeare, appeared in 1594 and 1595. Part I. is sus- his at all.

of the sonnets in 1609. These compositions, or s
definable portion of them, were spoken of as "
sonnets among his private friends" in the *Pall*
Meres, published in 1598, and must therefore h
date much earlier than 1609. The particular fo
adopted by Shakespeare had been exemp
Daniel in a work issued in 1592, and be
Surrey and others.

When we speak of those greatest dramati
master-strokes of the world's literature, we sho
material condition, to modern notions ludicro
the theatres in which they were presented.
characters were all acted by boys is not so r
pose; though we can hardly doubt that su
juvenile actors were always mediocre actors, and
accordingly of the Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra, R
or Desdemona, of those days. A pair of cross
sometimes two lathes, symbolized a battle; the s
side the dress showed a knight; the housekeep
over a broomstick stood for a caparisoned horse.
theatre possessed as its properties the limbs of
dragon, a large horse with its legs, a cage, a rock
of Turks and one of Mahound, a wheel, and h
Another owned a sun, a target, the triple plume o
of Wales with motto, six devils, and the pope astrid

Shakespeare's supreme genius, and the hearty
ceptance of his dramas, were not likely to pass un
by envy; Greene, in his *Groatsworth of Wit* (alrea
to), in enforcing the general text that play-writing
a work unfit for gentlemen, and that actors were p
and ungrateful, adverted malignantly to "an
beautified in our feathers, that, with his tiger's h
in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to
a blank verse as the best of you; and, being

totum, is, in his own conceit, the only Shake-
ntry." This was confuted however by Greene's
ettle, who is the earliest known eulogist of
d who speaks (among other more strictly
of his "facetious grace in writing." Here
bably not to be taken in its modern meaning
morous," but rather in a more general sense
citous"; nevertheless it might seem that
ere more especially struck, in the earlier work
t any rate, with his brilliancy in wit and re-
ys became the town-talk; Queen Elizabeth
sented at court, and, being charmed with the
ry IV., is said to have wished to see the carnal
boards in love—which gave the hint for writing
ives of Windsor. Her successor was not less
d Shakespeare was the favourite playwright of
ard's Diary (dating from 1648 to 1679) records
Shakespeare, living in his later days at Stratford,
stage with two plays every year, and for this
allowance so large that he spent at the rate of
annum. The diarist was vicar of Stratford, and not
have some knowledge of his facts; yet the state-
ardly be accepted in detail.

ness of Shakespeare's vocabulary is partly the rich-
s mind: it has been computed that he uses about
rds, while even so great a poetic successor as Milton
only about 8000. We find in him the technical
y, not alone of law as previously mentioned, but
f medicine, surgery, chemistry, war, navigation, field-
sic, necromancy, printing. He seems to have known
d Italian: some of his plays are founded on Italian
whereof no contemporary translation can be traced.
aid that he knew his own worth; his conviction that
gs are imperishable—even such minor writings as the

sonnets—is amply proveable from passages in t
for instance—

"So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

"Yet do thy worst, old Time! Despite thy
My love shall in my verse ever live young."

"Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful r
But you shall shine more bright in these
Than unswept stone besmeared with slu
When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
And broils root out the work of masonry
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire sh
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth: your praise shall stil
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doo
So, till the Judgment that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes."

"For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding Age's cruel knife,
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen;
And they shall live, and he in them still green."

"Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read,
And tongues to-be your being shall rehearse
When all the breathers of this world are dead.
You still shall live—such virtue hath my pen—
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths o

"Make answer, Muse! Wilt thou not haply say
'Truth needs no colour, with *his* colour fixed'?
Excuse not silence so: for 't lies in thee
To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
And to be praised of ages yet to be."

"Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh; and Death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:
And thou in this shalt find thy monument
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent."

t-tone of all these lines is wondrously inspiriting:
perfect and splendid confidence.[1] That Shake-
d an inconspicuous life, and took no heed for the
f any of his writings later than the *Venus and*
ucrece, should yet have known with such entire
would outlive the perishing body of men
e Resurrection of the Dead—this is the most
is extant history; the one which informs with
ng, and reconciles into a potent unity, the resi-
his career, sparse and disparate at best, some-
nt or incongruous-looking.

make only one observation regarding Shake-
s, and glance at one phase, and only one, of his
world of mind. The observation is simply this:
r may be his imperfections (and they are chiefly
deriving from excess of power, and exuberance
d performance), there is scarcely a sentence in the
n does not challenge admiration on one or other
unds—either for depth or fineness of thought or
for beauty or force of diction, or for true
d dramatic appropriateness. Then, as to Shake-
ition in the world of mind, it may be said that,
writers could be named who less belong than
rect sense, to what may be called the Party of
ogress, few from whom the watchwords of modern
less expressly audible, few who pertain more dis-
e aristocratic constitution of society, with a defined
ate and government, monarchical and hieratic, there
less none to whom, in the long run, the emancipated
of mind is more deeply indebted. He is, of all

[1] not be concealed, however, that somewhat similar expressions were
r sonneteers, and they formed almost a commonplace of sonnet-

for instance such watchwords as "Liberty, Equality, and Frater-
ivil and Religious Liberty," or "Am I not a man and a brother?"

writers, the one who works in the region of ma
nature—who fixes our attention upon man as th
in all combinations which we have to contempla
with. In comparison with the impulses and acts
spirit, all else is to him vague, alien, and r
supernaturalism, are for Shakespeare potent i
—possibly sincere personal convictions: but
subject-matter, are barely a part of his wo
In the strife of faiths and of sects at the close
century and opening of the seventeenth, his
coverable; catholic or protestant we know n
non-christian we cannot pronounce. He affirms
origin or destiny of the soul: what he fathoms is
what he exhibits its phenomena. If we call to n
with Shakespeare, the greatest preceding poet of
world, Dante, we shall see the immensity of the
this not alone in the choice of subject and mod
ment, but in the very essence of the thing devel
the intellectual forces at work upon it? and the
differences of degree, may be said of *all* previous
pitted against Shakespeare. In him only we find
starting-point—the mind, spirit, character, passio
physical personality, of man, without prepossessions
suppositions on the author's part: he is committed
except to telling us what he discerns and divines, an
a universality of perception for great and for li
radiant splendour of interpretation and presentment,
imaginative, to which no parallel exists. He fixes
upon realities, not upon suppositions: he shows u
facts of the world are such and such, not that the r
these facts are so and so. He compels us to atten
and his nature—a microcosm in a macrocosm: the n

[1] Chaucer, I think, approaches nearer than any other Europea
Shakespeare, in this respect.

open to our perception and worthy of our knowledge, the macrocosm not known, and not ascertained to be knowable. A new literature begins with Shakespeare; begins and in some sense ends with him, for he (it might almost be averred) exhausts its possibilities in suggestion and function, though of course not at al[illegible] in formative growth and sequence.

3. *Shakespea[illegible]e the Man.* Beyond the few matter-of-fact details that we know concerning the dramatist's life after he came to the ca[illegible]pital, we must turn to his sonnets for informa-tion. We kn[illegible]ow, for instance, that he had not been many years in Lond[illegible] before he began providing for his ultimate re-settlement in [illegible]atford-on-Avon. Early in 1597 he bought for £60 (a sum [illegible]ich may be roughly computed as equal to £600 at the present [illegible]y) the house named New Place, about the very best in Stratf[illegible] In 1602 he bought for £320 some arable land, 107 ac[illegible] in the parish of Old Stratford; and in the same year some p[illegible]rty in the town. In 1605 ensued his largest purchase — [illegible]o for the remainder of a lease, thirty-one years, of th[illegible]es of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe. [illegible] 1604, when he must still have been a London actor, he pr[illegible]uted one Rogers, who had bought a quantity of malt from l[illegible] and left the debt unpaid; and in 1608 he sued John Adde[illegible]rooke for a small debt, and, on Addenbrooke's absconding, [illegible]roceeded against his security: trivial facts which have been c[illegible]d, and no doubt truly so as far as they go, as showing tha[illegible] the author of *Julius Cæsar* and *King Lear* was a business-ma[illegible] looking sharply, like others, after his own material interests. S[illegible]me other facts of similar bearing will be mentioned in the sequ[illegible]. He was in the practice of visiting Stratford re-gularly, p[illegible]haps even once every year, during his London career. [illegible]e exact state of his family relations is open to con-jecture. [illegible] is presumed that, on first coming to the capital, he left his wi[illegible] and three children in Stratford: they may or may not have [illegible] joined him at a later date. He lived near the Bear

Garden, Southwark, in 1596: in 1609 he occupied a good house within the Liberty of the Clink. He frequented the Mermaid Tavern in Cheapside, close to Bread Street, as a member of a club founded by Sir Walter Raleigh: here he waged his famous "wit-combats" with Ben Jonson (ten years his junior), graphically described by Fuller. "Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I beheld like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, like an English man-of-war, lesser in bulk but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention." Jonson himself has left a pleasant record of "gentle Shakespeare," saying "I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry, as much as any: he was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature." This accords with the testimony of Chettle, who in addition to expressions already quoted) speaks of Shakespeare's "civil demeanour," and his "honesty," by which we could understand well-bred straightforwardness, the distinctive mark of a gentleman.

And now for the sonnets. This series, numbering 154 items, has, as we all know, been the object of all sorts of disquisitions and commentaries; some aiming to show that the sonnets contribute nothing, or next to nothing, to Shakespeare's biography; others, that they are written as in the person of a different speaker; others, that their main object is literary satire, a "take-off" of the excesses of amorous sonneteers. Others again, accepting the sonnets as substantially autobiographical, debate to whom they are addressed, whence originating, and why presenting the poet to us in the light in which they do present him; and one frequent attempt has been to explain away such *primâ facie* appearances in the sonnets as might induce us to think that Shakespeare was fond to [illegible] tuity of a

male friend, and illicitly enamoured of a female inveigler. For my part, having given the sonnets the best consideration in my power, I can come to but one conclusion—namely, that these [illegible] the very points which must *not* be explained away; that the [illegible] portray to us Shakespeare himself and such as he [illegible]

[illegible]timent and environment.

[illegible] fall into two main divisions. The first and [illegible] consists of verses addressed to a male friend, [illegible]rapturous self-devotion and self-abnegation of [illegible] especial enlarging upon the young man's per- [illegible]nd the obligation, incumbent on him from this [illegible]cumstances, to marry, and prolong his race. [illegible]t clearly indicated is the competition of some [illegible]ith Shakespeare for the affection and good offices [illegible] this other writer has with some likelihood been [illegible]e Spenser. The attachment expressed by Shake- [illegible]friend, manifestly a person of social rank far supe- [illegible], is, as I have said, "rapturous,"—no fainter word [illegible]lequate: it has even been thought by many to [illegible]ongly of passionate love as well-nigh to overbalance [illegible]e, patent though this is on the face of numerous [illegible]t their subject is really a man, and not a woman. [illegible]t I shall only say that the person in question is [illegible]certainly a man; that the feelings expressed are [illegible]ndship, sublimated indeed and unmeasured, yet [illegible]ed or perverted out of its own nature; and that [illegible]sive in these feelings may apparently be ascribed [illegible]e genuine fervour of the writer's sentiment, and [illegible]travagances of diction, such as Shakespeare was [illegible]t alone in his time in adopting. Conscious and [illegible]dulation of a valuable patron may also perhaps [illegible]s counting for something; not, I would with sin- [illegible]for very much: this also would be only too con- [illegible]the manners of the age. The second and shorter

division of the sonnets sets forth (in terms that are quite unmistakeable to any one who is not prepared to go the extreme length of rejecting the poems altogether in their primary and professed meaning) that the writer was infatuated and enslaved against his own better knowledge and sense of right

complexioned woman, unworthy of the love
man; and further that she intrigued, not only
himself in violation of the general canons of so
also with his friend—to all appearance the same
the other sonnets are addressed—in violation of
personal love and honour. I can discover no
sonnets, in this their twofold aspect, should not
picture of a certain stage in Shakespeare's life;
firmly believe that he entertained a long-stand
ardent attachment for a youth of high rank and
dowments of person and spirit, and that he got
a paramour of some fascination and no character
should we disbelieve either or both of these plain
facts? The only reason appears to be that we, or
would rather not believe them if we could help.

Who the woman may have been is totally obsc
152 shows her to have been a married woman
man has been searched for with diligence, and
dim semblance of successful result. The
never published by Shakespeare himself; but
were printed and issued by a bookseller, Tho
whose few words of introductory inscription[1] si
that the male friend to whom most of the poem
certain "Mr. W. H." I say "*seem* to imply"; for
construction of the words, no less than the mea

[1] The words are as follows (I modernize the spelling): "
getter of these ensuing sonnets Mr. W. H. all happiness a
promised by our ever-living Poet wisheth The well-wi
in setting forth T. T.

phrase "only begetter," is undoubtedly ambiguous, and has excited endless discussion. Assuming then that Mr. W. H. is the young man celebrated in the sonnets, we have to enquire who is represented by these initials. Henry Wriothesly Earl of Southampton, and William Herbert Earl of Pembroke, are the only two probable competitors started [illegible] name. Each of these men was in 1609 a peer, and not a "Mr.": but it is allowed on all hands that the application of the term "Mr." to a peer would be an anomaly not unexampled at that period. Both Wriothesly and Herbert were personally well known to Shakespeare: the former, so far as all records go, was certainly the better known of the two, and was, as we have already seen, a specially attached friend of his. The inversion of the initials "W. H." if Wriothesly is meant, whereas there is no inversion if Herbert is meant, counts for a little in favour of Herbert; not for very much, for the inscription is obviously reticent to some extent, and *may* have been purposely reticent even to the extent of such an inversion. Wriothesly was born in 1573, and would at the presumed date of the earliest among the sonnets—say 1597—have been twenty-four years of age. Herbert, who is known to have been a handsome young man, was born in 1580, and would in 1597 have been but seventeen; an age which, youthful as it is, need not be deemed absolutely inconsistent with the tone of the sonnets, especially in the mind of Shakespeare who had himself married at eighteen. Besides, if the earliest sonnets may be dated about 1597, many others are of course later than that: one of them seemingly refers to the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, and the accession of James I.—No. 107, beginning

"Not mine own fears nor the prophetic soul."

Altogether it seems that the claim of Herbert is rather the preferable one of the two. To me, accepting the sonnets as fairly autobiographical, it appears pretty clear that the friend who intrigued with Shakespeare's mistress, and whom I plainly un-

derstand to be the same person as the friend mentioned in the earlier sonnets, must have been named William, not Henry; and, if so, Herbert Earl of Pembroke, not Wriothesly Earl of Southampton. I found this opinion on the following three sonnets (135, 136, and 143) addressed to the woman. It has been observed [illegible] of mind that these sonnets pun upon the word "will," as meaning firstly "will, volition," and secondly "Will, William Shakespeare." I am not the first to point out that a *third* "Will"—*i.e.* a second man named William—is also in question. To emphasize this interpretation I print the sonnets with a triple typography for the word "will"; viz. will when volition is meant, *Will* (italics) when Shakespeare is meant, and WILL (capitals) when the interloping friend is meant.

"Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy will,
And *Will* to boot, and WILL in overplus:
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.
Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious,
Not once vouchsafe to hide my *Will* in thine?
Shall WILL in others seem right gracious,
And in my *Will* no fair acceptance shine?
The sea, all water, yet receives rain still,
And in abundance addeth to his store:
So thou, being *rich in will, add to thy will*
One *Will* of mine, to make thy large will more.
Let no unkind, no fair beseechers kill:[1]
Think all but one, and me in that one *Will*.

"If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy *Will*,
And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there;
Thus far for love my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.

[1] I do not understand this line. It seems to me that "kill" can hardly be right, and "skill" would make more sense: "skill" in the sense of "avail, succeed"—as in the expression "it skills not."—Since I wrote this note, Professor Dowden (to whose friendliness and eminent encouragements as a Shakespearean scholar I am indebted for some guidance and confirmation in this my trivial essay in the poet's biography) has suggested to me a very different emendation of the line—perhaps a better one.

Will will fulfil the treasure of thy love,—
Ay, fill it full with wills, and my *Will* one.
In things of great receipt, with ease we prove
Among a number one is reckoned none.
Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy store's account I one must be :
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
That nothing, me, a something sweet to thee.
Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me, for my name is *Will*.

"L[illegible] as a careful housewife runs to catch
One of her feathered creatures broke away,
S[illegible]s down her babe, and makes all swift dispatch
In pursuit of the thing she would have stay,—
W[illegible]hilst her neglected child holds her in chase,
Cries to catch her, whose busy care is bent
To follow that which flies before her face,
Not prizing her poor infant's discontent :—
So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind :
But, if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind.
So will I pray that thou mayst have thy WILL,
If thou turn back, and my loud crying still."

Another p[illegible]oint in favour of Pembroke as against Southamp-ton—and th[illegible]is, I fancy, has received little or no attention—arises from [illegible] phrase in sonnet 3—

"Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime"—

a manifest [illegible] and admitted assertion that the person addres[illegible] bore a stro[illegible]ng resemblance to his mother. Now, Pembr[illegible] really was [illegible]ery like the

"Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother,"

of Ben Jo[illegible]son's famous verse; whereas there is not, so [illegible] can learn, [illegible] any evidence to a like effect in the case o[illegible] ampton.[1] It may be said—and to me has been sa[illegible]

[1] Mr. Sch[illegible]arf, of the National Portrait-Gallery, has kindly [illegible] valuable aid [illegible]on this point. He says (July 1876): "I do not ca[illegible] representatio[illegible]n of the mother of Henry Wriothesly Earl of Sou[illegible]

friends most worthy of hearing—that "thou art thy *mother's* glass" means practically no more than "thou are thy *parent's* glass," the mother being selected for mention merely as the sole surviving parent. This, however, does not convince me; more especially considering that, as the entire passage in the sonnet is an argument that the young man ought to marry, and become [illegible] the natural thing to say by way of illustration, if only it could have been said with entire or partial truth, would be "thou art thy father's glass"—and, when the "mother" is substituted, I infer that this is done under the dictation of the actual fact.

I must now leave the sonnets, and revert to the general course of Shakespeare's life.—He was probably still resident in London in 1611: by 1612 he is known to have been resettled at Stratford, which continued to be his home for the few remaining years of his life. The alderman's truant son returned to his native town a man of more worldly consequence, even in the eyes of his solid, humdrum, provincial fellow-citizens, than his father had ever been; he occupied the best house in Stratford, and was in all likelihood the "greatest man" in that small town, as well as in "the great globe itself." His only son Hamnet had died in 1596, his father in 1601, his mother in 1608. His eldest daughter Susanna had in 1607 married Dr. Hall, a local physician of some eminence, and they already had a daughter, Elizabeth, born in 1608. Shakespeare's wife, and his younger daughter Judith, kept house with him. That he continued attentive to his own minor interests is shown by his buying, in 1612, joined in a petition to the Court of Chancery [illegible] certain sharers with himself in the farming of the tithes

's great friend. But between William Earl of Pembroke, and his ney's sister,' the portraits exhibit a marked resemblance. I think rly of the one of Mary Sidney in this gallery, and the many re- illiam Herbert by D. Mytens, especially those at Hardwick and

to pay their quota of a general burden; and by his having resisted, in 1614, a proposed enclosure of some common-lands, detrimental to his property. In February 1616 he married his daughter Judith to Mr. Thomas Quiney. It may have been in preparation for this event that on the 25th of January he had drawn-up his will; [illegible] finally executed on the 25th of M[illegible]ct health and mem[illegible] he was then sens[illegible] will he left all his[illegible] to Judith; and [illegible] furniture to his[illegible] The insignifica[illegible] upon, as showi[illegible] this it is replie[illegible] she was adequ[illegible] form of dower[illegible] large sum in a[illegible] at some time [illegible] which does no[illegible]

August 1623. His daughter Susanna Hall (the inheritor of the bulk of his property, and obviously therefore the person through whom he had hoped to "found a family," if that, as has sometimes been supposed, was really an object he had at heart) had but one child, Elizabeth. This lady married Thomas Nash Esquire, and after [illegible] quire, knighted by Ch[illegible] nd died in 1670. [illegible], had three sons, [illegible]ace, the race of

[illegible]ounted!"

[illegible]avenant, author [illegible]oraries as an [illegible] not averse to

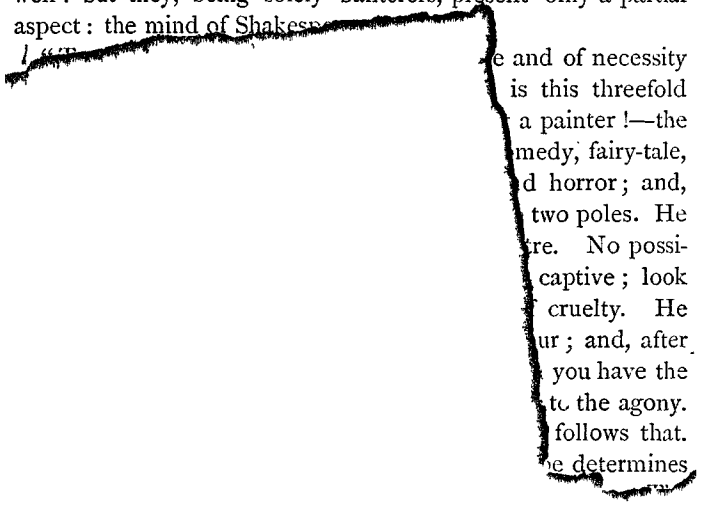
[illegible]e, or supposed [illegible]t to his grave, [illegible], the Jansen

of Shakespeare's plays. It was eulogized by Ben Jonson; and has been accepted as a true likeness by the idealist poet and painter William Blake, who professed to have seen Shakespeare's ghost, and who was at any rate better qualified than ninety-nine persons out of a hundred to infer from a man's spiritual product what his outer sem[illegible] fittingly have been.

I conclude, as [illegible] Victor Hugo's b[illegible] passages which [illegible] many of the int[illegible]

"What is Sha[illegible] Earth, the Glo[illegible] in Shakespeare[illegible] certainly not [illegible] traverses the [illegible] darkness and [illegible] within death. [illegible] thesis betwee[illegible] and the eye t[illegible]

tone, right accent, the whole human multitude with its hum. His poetry is himself, and is, at the same time, you. Shakespeare marks the termination of the middle ages. This closing of the middle ages is wrought by Rabelais and Cervantes as well: but they, being solely banterers, present only a partial aspect: the mind of Shakesp



e and of necessity
is this threefold
a painter!—the
medy, fairy-tale,
d horror; and,
two poles. He
re. No possi-
captive; look
cruelty. He
ur; and, after
you have the
to the agony.
follows that.
e determines

gams of thought and of event, can be translated into delicate contours, and can fill poesy with mysterious and exquisite types all the more ravishing for being a little dolorous, half inhering in the invisible, and at the same time most real, preoccupied with the shadow which is behind them, and essaying nevertheless to affect you with pleasure. The grace of depth exists. Modern geniuses alone have t[illegible] which notifies at once an elega[illegible] possesses this grace. <Ha[illegible] work; and at the two [illegible] heart in its tot[illegible] Sha[illegible] Imagination[illegible] delves more[illegible] arrived at t[illegible] philosophize[illegible] that sovereig[illegible] have out his [illegible] of truth—a v[illegible] shall we compa[illegible] coherent in see[illegible] mis-deduced. [illegible] child Arthur? [illegible] triumphant? wh[illegible] to Louis Seize[illegible] logic wherei[illegible] characteristic[illegible] far-away fac[illegible] Shakespeare. [illegible] draws from t[illegible] In this psy[illegible] less force, [illegible] mirth, that [illegible] casm, the p[illegible] miscroscop[illegible]

and a nadir, the vast whole, the profound detail—nothing is wanting to this mind. In approaching this man's work, one feels the enormous blast which might come from the opening of a world. The irradiation of genius in all directions—that is Shakespeare.

"If ever a man has scantly deserved that schoolboy encomium, "[illegible]" certainly it is Shakespeare. atest 'ne'er-do-weels' that had to catechize. Shake-, the swollen breast, the p in ss, lava in tor- housands, all simony, the Will he soon ments broad- contrast; at ure. Subtle, se. Not dis- t in simplicity may be the en- d inextricable— This simplicity, art. Simplicity, countenance of plicity: he is gnores. But goes straight erstrides the s no reserve, s the thing ht, for him. e light, like Richard the Desdemona,

Juliet, Titania; men, women, witches, fairies, ghosts; Shakespeare is open-armed—Take, take, take! More would you have? Here are Ariel, Parolles, Macduff, Prospero, Viola, Miranda, Caliban. More still? Here are Jessica, Cordelia, Cressida, Portia, Brabantio, Polonius, Horatio, Mercutio, Imogen, Pandarus of Troy, Bottom, Theseus. *Ecce Deus.* It is the Poet: he proffers himself: who will have me? He gives himself away, he spends himself abroad, he is prodigal of himself: he never empties. Why? He cannot. To him exhaustion is impossible. He is bottomless: he fills and pours, then recommences: it is the riddled pannier of genius. The drama of Shakespeare marches with a sort of frenzied rhythm; it is so vast that it totters; it is dizzy, and makes you dizzy: yet nothing is so solid as this quaking grandeur. Inspiration being a prodigy, a sacred stupor mingles in it. A certain majesty of soul resembles the wilderness, and astonishment is born thereof. Shakespeare, like all great poets and all great things, is steeped in trance. His own vegetation thrills him, his own tempest unnerves him. One would say at some moments that Shakespeare affrights Shakespeare. He feels the horror of his own depth. This is the mark of the supreme intellects. It is his own very area which stirs him, and communicates to him enormous indefinable oscillations. From time to time there comes upon the globe one of these spirits. Their passage renews art, science, philosophy, or society. They fill a century, then disappear. Then it is not a century alone that their light illumes; it is humanity from one end of time to the other: and one discerns that each of these men was the Human Spirit itself contained whole in one brain, and coming, at a given instant, to set on earth its hand and seal to Progression."

POETS BORN BETWEEN SHAKESPEARE AND MILTON.

SIR JOHN DAVIES	1570 to 1626.
THOMAS HEYWOOD	wrote in the earlier part of the 17th century.
JOHN DONNE	1573 to 1631.
BEN JONSON	1574 to 1637.
BISHOP JOSEPH HALL	1574 to 1656.
THOMAS DEKKER	wrote *c.* 1600.
JOHN FLETCHER	1576 to 1625.
JOHN WEBSTER	wrote *c.* 1600—died *c.* 1650.
PHINEAS FLETCHER	1582 to *c.* 1660.
CYRIL TOURNEUR	wrote *c.* 1610.
BISHOP RICHARD CORBET	1582 to 1635.
PHILIP MASSINGER	1584 to 1640.
GILES FLETCHER	*c.* 1585 to 1623.
SIR WILLIAM DRUMMOND	1585 to 1649.
FRANCIS BEAUMONT	1586 to 1615.
JOHN FORD	1586 to *c.* 1635.
GEORGE WITHER	1588 to 1667.
THOMAS CAREW	*c.* 1589 to 1639.
WILLIAM BROWNE	1590 to *c.* 1645.
ROBERT HERRICK	1591 to 1674.
FRANCIS QUARLES	1592 to 1644.
GEORGE HERBERT	1593 to 1632.
JAMES SHIRLEY	*c.* 1594 to 1666.
WILLIAM HABINGTON	1605 to 1654.
EDMUND WALLER	1605 to 1687.
SIR WILLIAM DAVENANT	1605 to 1668.
RICHARD CRASHAW	*c.* 1605 to 1650.

JOHN MILTON.

In the latter part of the sixteenth century a Mr. John Milton (or Mylton, for thus was the name spelled in the baptismal register of the poet at a subsequent date) held the appointment of Under-Ranger of the Royal Forest of Shotover, near Oxford. The family, which was one of very creditable standing, traced its origin from a town bearing the same name in Oxfordshire. This Mr. John Milton was a zealous Roman-Catholic; and his son John, having embraced the reformed religion at an early age, was disinherited, and left to shift for himself. The son came to London, and entered on the profession of a scrivener—much the same sort of thing as the "Notaire" so familiar to us in the French comedy of Molière and others; a position combining something of what we now call a notary with a good deal of the attorney. The junior Milton throve in his profession, and amassed a competent estate, on which he lived in his later years. He had received his education at Oxford, and was a man a man of superior acquirements, especially in music: some specimens of his compositions are given in Burney's *History of Music*. Nor did he entirely abstain from dabbling in verse. He had turned the age of forty when he married a lady of good Welsh family, Sarah Jeffreys (or perhaps bearing at this date the name of Bradshaw, from a previous marriage). Two sons and three daughters were the fruit of this union. It is to the second child and first son that the name of Milton owes its immortality.

John Milton the future poet was born in Bread Street, London, on the 9th of December 1608. Nature had done her choicest for him, both in person and in mind; and at a very early age he began to raise in his father uncommon hopes of his destined capabilities. Some symptoms of poetic gifts were discernible when he was but ten years old. The father engaged a domestic tutor for his instruction, Mr. Thomas Young: the boy entered from the first into study with extraordinary ardour, and thus began that course of overstraining and weakening of the eyes which ended in total blindness. Next he went to St. Paul's School, under the tuition of Dr. Gill; and was soon afterwards, on the 12th of February 1625, transferred to Christ College, Cambridge. Here he distinguished himself in many ways, including the writing of Latin verses: he took his degree as M.A. in 1632.

Milton's father had now quitted his profession and London, to pass the evening of life in comfortable retirement at Horton in Buckinghamshire. Hither the son returned upon leaving college. He continued his studies, reading over all the Greek and Latin classics. The choice of a vocation in life was before him. Both the church and the bar were meditated and rejected; the former because Milton, a young man already of a severe rectitude of mind, intolerant of all snug expediences and shifty compromises, considered the yoke of the church, as then established, tyrannous, and the oaths to be taken unendurable. It was apparently at Horton that he wrote his first poems plainly fated not to die—the *Allegro*, *Penseroso*, *Comus*, and *Lycidas*. These poems had, however, had various forerunners still holding their place amid the body of Milton's works. His paraphrases of the 114th and 126th Psalms were done at the age of fifteen: his earliest known original verses were those *On the Death of a Fair Infant*, dating in 1625, his seventeenth year. There is something very pleasurable to contemplate in the earnest studiousness, and leisurely rounded productivity, of

Milton's early manhood. He is in no hurry to live through his career,—only to lay the solid foundations of an exalted structure of work, and to make each successive portion of it clearly and unmistakeably right, not needing re-doing or repentance. It is indeed highly probable that in these early years he wrote many poems, of a less positive measure of excellence, which have not come down to us: but whatever *has* come down from the Horton period is of its class a masterpiece. For stately discrimination of language, *Lycidas* is a model unsuperseded to the present day; the *Allegro* and *Penseroso* are almost the first-fruits of descriptive poetry in English; *Comus* is both unlike and higher than any work that had preceded it under the designation of a "masque." This semi-dramatic work was performed in 1634 at Ludlow Castle before the Earl of Ludlow, then Lord President of Wales. It was printed in 1637, and *Lycidas* in 1638. From about this time, therefore, we may assume that, by the cultivated among his reading countrymen, Milton was understood to be a preëminent poet; although for many years thence ensuing his work, and his consequent general celebrity, lay in very different directions.

Soon after the death of his mother, Milton in 1638 went abroad. He was absent about a year and a quarter. His journey lay through France and Italy: he had intended to visit Sicily and Greece as well, but this purpose remained still unfulfilled when events recalled him to England. In Paris he was introduced to Grotius; in Florence, to Galileo, then kept under the custody of the Inquisition; in Naples, to Manso, Marquis of Villa, now a very aged man, who had been the admirer and friend, and partly the biographer, of Tasso. He saw also Venice and Geneva. In all these cities—some of them conspicuously luxurious—he lived, as he afterwards solemnly asseverated in one of his controversial writings, free from all vice. He was back in England in August 1639; having expedited his return through a patriotic reluctance to be abroad

when events of such vital importance to the future of his country, in religion and politics, were in progress.

He now engaged a house in Aldersgate Street, and undertook the education of the two sons of his sister, married to a Mr. Philips; and soon afterwards he received also some other youths as pupils, all of them seemingly the sons of his friends. He boarded and lodged them, and subjected them to a strict course of discipline. The books which he used in teaching them the classical languages were such as conveyed some solid instruction, and they form a list very extraordinary to modern eyes, especially as being the selection of so great a poet and master of written style. There is no Homer and no Vergil; but there are Oppian, Ælian's *Tactics*, Palladius, Celsus, Vitruvius, and the *Stratagems* of Frontinus. The only poets of the first order are Hesiod and Lucretius. Hebrew, mathematics, and astronomy, were also included in the range of instruction, with French and Italian (these, along with Spanish, were the modern languages known to Milton); nor was he lax in prescribing martial and other exercises subsidiary to the full scope of life of a well-trained citizen.

In 1641 he stepped into the lists of controversy as a prose-writer, beginning the series of works which, far more than his poetry, gave him his conspicuous public standing during his lifetime, and have doubtless bereft the world of many an immortal verse which it would otherwise have to treasure. His first prose work was a treatise on the Reformation of England; followed by three other treatises, the chief of which was *The Reason of Church Government urged against Prelaty*. In the succeeding year, 1642, he continued the same controversy with his *Apology for Smectymnuus*—the name Smectymnuus being the pseudonym under which five puritan ministers had already published a book of cognate subject-matter. The initials of their names (Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William [Uuilliam] Spurstow) made up this formidable vocable.

Milton had nearly reached the typical mid age of man, thirty-five, before he entered the state of marriage. In the year 1643 he wedded Mary, the daughter of Richard Powell, of Forest Hill, Oxfordshire, a gentleman of some estate, whose political principles and connexions were wholly contrary to the poet's. The marriage soon became an obviously unhappy one; and, though the differences were shortly patched up, it probably never altered very much in essential character. A cohabitation of about a month seems to have been enough to convince Mrs. Milton that her bridegroom was not quite the man for her, nor she the woman for him. She went to her father's house, to spend there the residue of the summer: then, when Milton requested her return, she paid no attention to his applications. This was not Milton's notion of the matrimonial relation. He turned up his Bible, and soon discovered that divorce is lawful to an extent and under conditions not theretofore ratified by English or other christian legislation. In 1644 he published *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce;* and in 1645, *Tetrachordon, or Expositions upon the Four chief Places in Scripture which treat of Marriage*, and another pamphlet besides. Nor did he stop here, but proceeded without more ado to court a young lady of great sense and beauty, the daughter of Dr. Davies, and would no doubt (supposing her consent obtained) have made a match of it, unindebted to any sort of church authorization. But a timely submission on his wife's part dispersed these bold schemes. One day, when Milton was at the house of a relative, she made her appearance, and implored forgiveness. Milton relented. However austere and unbending may have been his tone of character and mind in some relations, one cannot but recognize here a noble leonine clemency; and, when one considers his legitimate grounds of complaint against his wife, and how far his feelings and plans stood committed with Miss Davies, a lofty spirit of self-denial as well. Milton would not be generous by halves. Having

received back his absentee wife, he treated her kindly; and soon afterwards, in 1646, her loyalist father being involved in the catastrophe of the monarchy, and exposed to sequestrations, he received both this gentleman and his sons into his own house, and kept them there till their affairs were accommodated. This act is the more striking when we reflect that the paternal influence had probably been freely exerted to disgust Mary Milton with her marital home, and to retain her away from her wifely duties; the household of Mr. Powell was presumably a good deal livelier and more jovial than that of the scholastic puritan. Milton's own father had been already domesticated with him some little while—from about the time when his wife quitted London. His death, and also that of Mr. Powell, took place in 1647; and it is to be surmised that the junior Powells then ceased to be inmates of Milton's house.

In 1644 the latter published the now most famous of his prose works, named *Areopagitica, a Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing.* The title explains the important thesis of this essay. The author held that truth could not be too widely diffused; that publicity was its best protection against intermixture with error; and that anything like a preliminary censorship of the press was noxious and unworthy of freemen. He was now hostile to the Presbyterian party, probably on account of their general religious intolerance. He was growing in political estimation. There had been an idea of making him adjutant-general to Sir William Waller; but on the re-modelling of the army this commander was set aside, and the project fell through. In 1645 he reappeared as a poet, but not on any extensive scale, publishing a collection of the English and Latin verses of his youth. His first child, Anne, was born in July 1646; the second, Mary, in October 1648.

The year 1649 was well calculated to try the mettle of

thinkers and republicans: it found Milton equal to the occasion. He approved the execution of that far worse than useless monarch, Charles the First. Early in this year he published, in connexion with these stirring questions, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates;* followed by *Eikonoclastes*, an answer to the famous *Eikon Basilike.* The French writer, De Saumaise (latinized into Salmasius) issued a *Defensio Regia*, in behalf of Charles the Second; to this Milton, in 1651, replied with his Latin work *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano*, an eloquent performance, freely indulging in those acerbities with which every sort of disputation was then seasoned. It earned great applause, and was remunerated by the English government with the large sum of £1000. To Milton himself it was in fact a priceless effort, for it cost him his sight. He had been warned by physicians that, in the then condition of his eyes, the labour of writing such a book might result in blindness: with majestic intrepidity he undertook the task at the bidding of the Council of State, accomplished it, and paid the forecast forfeit. Most pages in the annals of patriotic heroism grow dim before this one.

Milton was now an officer of high position in the English Commonwealth; having, on the 15th of March 1649, been appointed, without solicitation, Secretary for Foreign Tongues to the Council of State, a post chiefly concerned with the relations of England in continental affairs. He was a very distinguished person in the eyes of eminent foreigners. He continued to occupy a like position under the protectorship of Oliver Cromwell; and again under Richard Cromwell, and on to the Restoration of Charles the Second. The salary of his office was nearly £300 per annum; but during the protectorship it was reduced, and an assistant appointed—at first (it would seem) Philip Meadows, and afterwards the celebrated Andrew Marvell. For a while Milton lived in Whitehall; afterwards in lodgings in Petty France opening on St. James's Park.

A son was born to him in March 1650, but soon died; his youngest daughter Deborah came into the world in May 1652, and the confinement proved fatal to his wife Mary.

The exact date when total blindness overtook the poet is uncertain: it was probably later than the early part of 1653, but before the beginning of 1654. The disease has generally been termed gutta serena: paralysis of the optic nerve might be a more accurate and explicit term. This calamity, while it oppressed Milton, did not overwhelm him: he continued his official and controversial labours. A *Defensio secunda pro Populo Anglicano* appeared from his pen in 1654, being a reply to Pierre du Moulin junior: it distinctly expressed the author's adhesion to Cromwell's cause.

Losing his wife in 1652, when absolute blindness was imminent, the poet passed a wifeless man through many long months of "total eclipse," not marrying again till the 12th of November 1656—which looks like a rather strong symptom that the yoke of marriage had not proved an altogether easy one to his shoulders. His second bride was Katharine the daughter of Captain Woodcock, of Hackney. With her (as one of the loveliest of his unequalled sonnets assures us) he was happy; but Death soon put an end to his contentment—she died, also in childbirth, in February 1658. Milton again went through a rather long term of widowerhood; eventually, perhaps in the year 1663, on the recommendation of his friend Dr. Paget, he married Elizabeth Minshull, the daughter of a gentleman in Cheshire, about thirty years younger than himself. There was no issue of this marriage. Milton, as one of his writings shows, was not inclined to espouse a widow: and in all his three nuptials he avoided doing so. His eldest daughter was now grown up—about seventeen years of age—only five or six years younger than her new stepmother: the other two daughters were also living. The two elder are recorded to have been very serviceable to their father's studies,

but in a mode which must have been irksome and grievous in an extreme degree even to the most dutiful children. They had been somehow taught to pronounce the principal modern languages, and also Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; and they read Milton the various authors in these tongues, without at all knowing the meaning of what they articulated. He is reported nevertheless to have said that the two elder daughters were not attentive to him:—perhaps flesh and blood failed under such an ordeal as the above-named, or perhaps the blind and aging Milton, strict even in youth, was a little rigid and unattaching to the blooming girls. His third wife tended him with assiduity, and secured his affectionate good-will.

Milton was by this time not only blind and aging, but also disappointed—if disappointment can indeed be affirmed of so lofty and severe a soul—in all his most cherished hopes and expectations for the public weal. The despicable profligate, Charles the Second, reoccupied the throne of England in May 1660, soon after Milton had published *A Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, opposing monarchy; and everything noblest in the nation recoiled from the pollution of the royal presence. Milton, still residing in Petty France, quitted his home, and lay concealed in a friend's house: the two parts of his *Defensio*, and the *Eikonoclastes*, were appropriately burned by the common hangman. The poet Davenant is said to have interested himself for Milton, who had done the like for *him* in the very diverse days of 1657: there is moreover a curious story that a mock funeral was enacted, so as to elude pursuers. The indemnity for heroes and patriots published in August of this year did not exclude Milton; but it would seem that he remained awhile in the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. He then returned to the neighbourhood of his former house in the city; and, though inevitably distinguished by the disfavour of the people in power, suffered no further molestation of any importance.

Before these troubles began—perhaps in 1658, or even earlier—the poet had commenced the great work of his life, *Paradise Lost*. He had entertained a project of writing on the same theme a tragedy according to the antique model; but this scheme was laid aside, and the narrative poem undertaken, and completed in or about 1665. It consisted originally of only ten Books (instead of twelve as now): the larger number was made up in 1674, in the second edition, by dividing the 7th and 10th sections. The poem, after much difficulty in getting it licensed, was published by Mr. Simmons in 1667. The price paid down for it was £5; to be followed by £15, contingent upon the sale of a second and a third large impression. As it turned out, the first edition, 1500 copies, sold off in two years to the extent of 1300: the remaining 200 took five years more to sell. Before *Paradise Lost*, blank verse in the English language had been almost confined to dramatic works: Milton adopted this measure as alone suitable to so august a theme, and, in his preliminary notice to the poem, went so far as to denounce rhyme as trivial and barbarous. In 1670 Michael Elwood, a well-meaning quaker admirer who acted from time to time as Milton's amanuensis, made a remark which set him upon the composition of *Paradise Regained*. This was published, along with *Samson Agonistes*, in 1671; the singular perversity of authorship which led Milton to prefer *Paradise Regained* to *Paradise Lost* has often been remarked upon.

There are not many more incidents to be noted in the closing years of this illustrious life. In 1665 the poet had quitted London, in which the great plague was then raging, and he lived awhile in the village of Chalfont St. Giles, in Buckinghamshire. When the epidemic was over, he returned: his last habitation was in Artillery Walk, Bunhill Fields. His daughters did not reside with him during the final four or five years of his life. He suffered from gout; and an attack of

this malady carried him off on the 8th of November 1674. His will, which was afterwards disputed in the interest of his daughters, left everything to his wife—the total value being about £1500. His tomb is in the Church of St. Giles Cripplegate.

The principal writings of Milton not already mentioned were a *Latin Grammar*, published in 1661; a *History of England*, 1670, which he only brought down to the date of the Norman conquest; a *System of Logic after the Method of Ramus*, 1672; a *Treatise of True Religion*, 1673, in the course of which he inveighed against popery, and propounded, as the limit which deserved political toleration, any phase of religious thought which should recognize the Scriptures as sufficient guide; *Familiar Epistles in Latin*, and some Academical Exercises, 1674. He had at one time, like his predecessor Spenser, and his successor Dryden, projected writing a poem on the story of King Arthur. In 1823 was made the important discovery of a MS. work by Milton, *De Doctrinâ Christianâ Libri duo:* the copy was found in the State-paper Office, and was published without delay. Milton, during his life, was classed in a general way among the Independents, the religious body to which Cromwell also belonged: but this MS. showed him to be a christian differing considerably from the sects mostly recognized as within any pale of orthodoxy. He did not accept the ordinary dogmas of the Trinity, or of the divinity of Christ: on the latter subject he might be considered an Arian rather than a Socinian. In various other respects also his opinions assumed a great latitude; he denied, for instance, that polygamy is unlawful, and joined in no public form of worship.

Milton was from childhood and all through the years of his less advanced manhood eminently handsome, and continued a fine old man to the last. His hair was light brown, and remained plenteous, his complexion fair and ruddy; the features

were symmetrical; the eyes, grey in hue, suffered no perceptible alteration from his blindness. He was rather below than above the middle height, neither fat nor thin, active in person, erect in deportment, and seemly in dress. His courage was abundant, and he was a good swordsman. His voice was musical, as befitted a man one of whose chief relaxations consisted in music; he played on the organ and bass-viol. Another relaxation was conversation with friends, among whom he was cheerful, open, and an interesting talker. His temper was serene, and it is said that he made no enmities other than such as arose from public grounds: as a controversialist, indeed, Milton was sufficiently bitter, and even abusive, but he did not regard himself as naturally controversial—rather as summoned by a loftier Muse to a calmer, deeper, and more perennial utterance. He was abstemious, and eschewed strong liquors; he had a fine memory, and much width of reading, and in youth a predilection for romance. Though never rich, he retained a sufficiency to free his declining years from any sordid discomfort. His morals were always pure—his religion deep-seated. Among Milton's personal habits, it is recorded that he smoked a pipe at the close of evening; and that he composed poetry chiefly in the winter-time, and not unfrequently while lying in bed.

If ever a man lived of whom an upright and intellectual nation may be proud, it is Milton. His elevation in every aspect—of person, of character, of mind, of acquirements, of conduct, of the field for the exercise of his powers, of political environment, and (what is here the most important of all) of poetic purpose and performance—is almost fatiguingly conspicuous and uniform. An ordinary mind contemplating Milton can realize to itself the feeling of the Athenian who resented hearing Aristides for ever styled "the Just." Such a mind feels a little and excusably provoked at the serene and severe loftiness of a Milton, and casts about to find him blameworthy in his very superiority—an exacting husband and father,

an over-learned writer, cumbrous or stilted in prose and scholastically accoutred in verse, a political and religious extremist. There may be something in these objections, or the smaller kind of souls will please themselves by supposing there is something in them. Honour is the predominant emotion naturally felt towards Milton—hardly enthusiasm—certainly not sympathy. Perhaps a decided feeling of unsympathy would affect many of us, were it not for the one great misfortune of the poet. Nature had forbidden him to be infirm in himself, but gave him a crown of accidental or physical infirmity, and bowed him somewhat—a little lower than the angels—towards sympathy. This Aristides was blind.

Any one who has even a small inkling of self-knowledge must feel, two centuries after the death of Milton, that to pretend to say much about the quality of his poetry would be an impertinence. Admiration and eulogium are long ago discounted: objections sound insolent, and are at any rate supererogatory. One's portion is to read and reverence. Still, something remains to be defined by an independent appreciator, however deeply respectful. I shall reduce this something to a minimum: and have indeed, in the preceding general observations about Milton's personal and intellectual character, indicated most of the points which seem to deserve some sort of expression with regard to his poetry.

Among Milton's many great attributes, his mastery of the sublime is the one which has probably received the most frequent and most emphatic laudation. For my own part, I think it open to question whether, even in this preëminent possession of a most preëminent poetic gift, he shows so signal a superiority as he does in point of utterance (as it may be called), or sonority. His power over language, in its beauty and its majesty, his mastery of form and of verse, his dominance over all persuasion and all stress and sustainment of sound, its music and loveliness, its resources and charms, its dignity, austerity, and

awe,—these form perhaps the most marked distinction of Milton, and his most genuinely and widely felt appeal. It seems conceivable that some readers, not strictly destitute of susceptibility to poetry, might remain cold and obtuse to the sublimity of Milton, or might acknowledge without truly admiring it: but anybody who has read Milton with some moderate degree of attention, and who yet fails to feel the noble delight of his diction and music—his "numbers," as an elder generation of critics used happily to phrase it—must be pronounced deficient in the primary sense of poetry.

From a certain point of view there is no poet more difficult to estimate than Milton — salient and unmistakeable as his leading characteristics are to the least expert student of poetry. To appraise Milton is to appraise *Paradise Lost;* or, conversely, to appraise *Paradise Lost* is in the main to appraise Milton. Now *Paradise Lost* is an enormously difficult book to give a fair account of even to one's own instincts or intuitions—much more to one's critical or reasoning faculties, or, through the medium of words, to the like faculties of the reader. The great difficulty consists in this: That *Paradise Lost* is so interwoven with the religion and religious associations of the people, and is written from a standard of conception so lofty and ideal in many respects, that one can hardly bring oneself to apply any different standard to it, and yet one feels that in numerous instances the product is not commensurate with that standard. Not so much that it falls below it (though this also is indisputably true in a sense) as that it deviates entirely. To measure some things in the poem by the ideal standard is like trying chemical substances by the wrong test: they yield no response to the demandant. Hence, I think, some disappointment to the prepossessed reader of *Paradise Lost*, or to the reader who, being unprepossessed, has the courage also to be candid: the poem ought, he fancies, to be as true as a divine oracle, unswerving from the severe and impeccable ideal line, and be-

hold it is considerably otherwise. The fault, or part of the fault, lies with the reader. There is no final reason why the spiritual afflatus which wrapped Milton, the atmosphere of ideas and *data* in which he lived, should be closer to ultimate truth and right, to the sublime of a divine equity, than those of Homer or any other great poet. The inextinguishable laughter of Olympus is alien to us, but has a poetic value of its own not likely soon to perish: the scholastic harangues of Jehovah and Messiah, or the cannonades of Satan and Moloch, may also be alien to us, and it is only our prejudices which, perceiving them to be thus alien, refuse to allow the fair consequence—that these things must be dismissed as having any connexion, rightful or wrongful, with supernal truth, and must henceforth be regarded as merely so much surplusage for any save poetic ends. It remains to be judged whether they are good poetry or bad. To Milton they were as ideal and profound as to Homer the laughter of the gods, and Ares wounded by Diomed; perhaps not more:—to us, *neither* need be profound or ideal. Like all other products of human mind, how great soever—and clearly it ranks among the very great—*Paradise Lost* is local and temporary: it belongs to the puritan Milton, it belongs to the England of the seventeenth century, inspired by Hebrew religionists and poets, and fancying that it possessed a final criterion of truth, and almost a final interpretation of truth. Local and temporary it is in its constituent parts—only in its essence or outcome universal and undying: like the *Iliad* of Homer, the *Commedia* of Dante, the *Prometheus* of Shelley, the *Faust* of Göthe.

"Thus at the rushing loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by."

SAMUEL BUTLER.

Of the author of *Hudibras*, we know that he wrote *Hudibras*, and not many facts besides. Samuel Butler (or Boteler, as the name was written during his lifetime) was born at Strensham in Worcestershire, near the river Avon, in 1612, and was christened on the 8th of February in that year. The house of his birth was standing till very recently; but in 1873 was pulled down, as no longer tenantable. His father was certainly not rich, nor yet exactly poor; he was a well-reputed farmer, with property of his own worth about £10 per annum, named Boteler's Tenement, and renting also a farm of the yearly value of £300. His landlord, Sir William Russel, was a most zealous royalist; probably the elder Butler was the same, and brought up his whole family in principles of Church and State such as we find underlying *Hudibras*, and expressing themselves in a hectoring scorn and detestation of the opposite party, and in uproarious ridicule of them and theirs. There were seven children in the family altogether; but the fortunes of all save Samuel remain wholly dark to us.

Samuel was educated at the College School, Worcester, under Prebendary Bright, a very celebrated schoolmaster, who appears to have turned out, in the person of young Butler, a pupil fully equipped in all sorts of solid and miscellaneous knowledge. It has been said that the youth went afterwards to Cambridge University, or to Oxford, or to both; the probability appears to be that in fact he went to neither. The first

employment at which we find him working is that of clerk to Mr. Thomas Jefferies, of Earl's Croom, Worcestershire, an eminent Justice of the Peace. In this post, if not indeed by studies still closer to the date when he quitted school, he must have laid the foundation of that knowledge of legal terms and technicalities of which *Hudibras* furnishes such abundant evidence; he is said also to have been a member of Gray's Inn, but does not appear to have ever actually practised law. Having no lack of leisure at Earl's Croom, he studied history, poetry, music, and painting. He contracted a friendship with Samuel Cooper, the excellent miniature-painter, and executed some pictures of his own—among others, it is alleged, a portrait of Cromwell. The disappearance of this record of the future Lord Protector—if indeed it ever existed, which we may pretty safely assume it did not—is probably little loss to Cromwell's memory or to Butler's, to history or to art: for his pictures are generally said to have been poor affairs. In 1774 it was mentioned that some of them which then survived "served to stop windows, and save the tax; indeed, they were not fit for much else."

Leaving Mr. Jefferies at some undefined but probably still very early age, Butler entered the household of the Earl of Kent, at Wrest in Bedfordshire, perhaps as one of the gentlemen in the retinue of the Countess. Here the distinguished writer, John Selden, was domiciled as solicitor and steward; for him Butler wrote letters and made translations, and it has been surmised that, after the death of the Earl in 1639, Selden was secretly married to the widow. Butler remained at Wrest, where there was a good library, several years; hence he passed into the establishment of Sir Samuel Luke, M.P., at Woodend, or Cople-Hoo Farm, also in Bedfordshire. Sir Samuel was a knight of ancient family, a colonel in the army of the Parliament, scoutmaster-general for the county, and governor of Newport Pagnell. It is difficult to suppose that Luke was

really so grotesque a figure, or so absurd and offensive a creature, as Hudibras, although some memoirs belonging to the year 1659 describe him, both in person and in character, to a nearly corresponding effect. Yet that he was the original of that crapulous pedant-knight, and that two other competitors who have been suggested (Sir Henry Rosewell of Ford Abbey, Devonshire, and Colonel Rolls) must be set aside in his favour or disfavour, is not only evidenced by the general consent of contemporaries, but is further proved to demonstration by a quatrain put into the mouth of Hudibras in the course of the poem:—

> "'Tis sung there is a valiant Mamaluke
> In foreign land, yclept Sir Sam'el Luke;[1]
> To whom we have been oft compared
> For person, parts, address, and beard."

At Woodend, it is believed—some writers say, even earlier at Wrest, which seems incomparably less probable—Butler began his poetic burlesque; but we may readily guess that Sir Samuel and his political associates were not allowed to know much about it. Butler acted seemingly as clerk to Sir Samuel; and his consistency as a royalist may have been of a standard not too severe to allow of his performing his clerkly duties regularly and accurately in public, while in private he loathed his employer, and in the secresy of his closet satirized him with

[1] Part I. canto I. Instead of the name "Sir Sam'el Luke," a blank is left in the text: the necessity of the rhyme is decisive as to the correct name. Mr. Robert Bell, in his edition of Butler, calls attention (and doubtless not for the first time) to this couplet, but he says that it is "in a different measure from the rest of the poem"—*i.e.*; in ordinary five-foot metre, instead of four-foot. This is a manifest oversight. The rhyme is the entire dactyl "Mamaluke," rhyming with the entire dactyl "Sam'el Luke"—not (as Mr. Bell assumes) the final syllable "luke" rhyming with "Luke"; and this makes the identification far more clear—or rather perfectly indisputable. Similar dactylic rhymes are not uncommon in *Hudibras*—as for instance (at the opening of Part I. canto 2.):

> "There was an ancient sage Phi*losopher*
> That had read Alexander *Ross over.*"

virulent animosity, and a consummate perception of what would gall most sorely, and expose most odiously.

In 1660 his sacred and debauched majesty Charles II. was reinstated on the throne; and Butler's parliamentarian penance, with any panics naturally deriving from it, came to an end. How or why he was at once known to be a deserving man under the kingly *régime* is not apparent; but very shortly he received the appointment of Secretary to the Earl of Carbery, President of Wales, and was made Steward of Ludlow Castle. This post he retained up to the close of 1661. Whether he had ceased to hold it by January 1662, or remained in office some considerable while longer, is a moot-point—items of evidence being adduced on each side of the question. Somewhere about the date of his appointment to Ludlow he married Mrs. Herbert, a widow lady of good family, who is said by some writers to have been at one time the wife of a Mr. Morgan. This last point is doubtful; nor is it quite certain, as others have averred, that Butler received a competent fortune with her, upon which he lived for a while after the marriage; one account regarding this matter is that the money was finally lost through being invested in bad securities.

One day at the end of 1662 Butler exchanged provincial obscurity for metropolitan and national popularity, the applause of universal laughter, enduring fame, and the primacy in one particular form of poetic enterprise. He published *Hudibras*, Part I.; the three cantos which end with the confinement of the knight and his squire in the stocks—"written," so the title-page purported, "in the time of the late wars." The Earl of Dorset is credited with being the first man to remark the book, and vent it about at court. The king, and the royalist party generally, took it up with the keenest delight, and chuckled over it in unending ripples of cachinnation. Charles, indeed, was wont to carry the volume in his pocket, and spiced his talk liberally with quotations from it; and he sent for Butler, to

make his personal acquaintance. The name of the poem and its hero became identified with the author, and Butler was currently spoken of as "Hudibras." In a month the book was sufficiently popular to be pirated; and soon afterwards a spurious imitation of it appeared, followed at intervals by several others. There is an anecdote of Dorset and Butler which seems probable enough on the face of it, and gives us a vivid picture of the poet: I hardly know why some recent biographers should regard it as a gratuitous concoction. "His lordship," it is said, "having a great desire to spend an evening as a private gentleman with the author of *Hudibras*, prevailed with Mr. Fleetwood Shepherd to introduce him into his company at a tavern which they used, in the character only of a common friend. This being done, Mr. Butler, while the first bottle was drinking, appeared very flat and heavy; at the second bottle, brisk and lively, full of wit and learning, and a most agreeable companion; but, before the third bottle was finished, he sunk again into such deep stupidity and dullness that hardly anybody would have believed him to be the author of a book which abounded with so much wit, learning, and pleasantry. Next morning Mr. Shepherd asked his lordship's opinion of Butler: who answered, "He is like a ninepin, little at both ends, but great in the middle.'" It is remarkable that, while multitudes of people, lively or slow-witted, found *Hudibras* so marvellously amusing, the diarist Pepys—a man of good discernment, and quite capable of appreciating a joke—looked upon the poem as tedious and rubbishy. Hounded on by the praises of others, and applying himself to the book time after time, his final estimate was still this—"I cannot, I confess, see where the wit lies."

In 1664 was issued the Second Part of *Hudibras*, which had to all likehood been written before the first was published; and not till 1678 the Third Part, which still leaves the work uncompleted, nor is it known what the conclusion was to have been.

In the long interval of fourteen years, Butler remained inconspicuous; probably however he at some time visited France and Holland. It would appear indeed that in the early flush of his renown the ball was at his foot, but he allowed his opportunity to slip; according to Aubrey, "he might have had preferments at first, but would not accept any but very good, and so got none." There are various rumours, all uncertain, as to the details. One is that the king gave him 300 guineas, or even, pursuant to the royal intention, 3000, which was surreptitiously reduced by some underling to the lower sum; another, that the poet became secretary to the Duke of Buckingham (the "Zimri" of Dryden) when his Grace was Chancellor of the University of Cambridge; another, that he had a yearly pension of £1000, which may be securely pronounced false, nor can even the minor amount of £100, which has also been mentioned, be credited. Packe relates an anecdote how Butler called upon Buckingham by appointment, with a view to some arrangement to his advantage: but the Duke, descrying two fair and frail ones of his acquaintance, flitted off after them, leaving the poet once and for all in the lurch. Certain it is that Butler, in his posthumous *Remains*, left unpublished until 1759, speaks with great severity of Buckingham among the pieces in prose named *Characters*. He has continually been cited as one of the many instances of the neglect of men of genius by courts and courtiers, and no doubt with too much reason; although the neglect in his case may have been somewhat less flagrant, and less absolute and shameful, than common report gives out. His own genuine writings do not contain any distinct complaints on this head: some such appeared in compositions attributed to him, but these have long been known to be spurious.

Undoubtedly, however, Butler was poor: *Hudibras* coined laughter for others, but for himself no worldly pelf. His close friend, William Longueville of the Inner Temple, is said to

have supported him at one time when he was wholly without resources. Packe terms him a "modest but unfortunate poet." The son of Longueville followed a middle course, and perhaps a right one, in affirming that Butler, though often disappointed, was never reduced to want or beggary, and did not die in any person's debt. His death, indeed, after long years of struggle and mortification, is the only other event which it remains for me to record; he expired on the 25th of September 1680, probably in Rose Street, Covent Garden, and was buried in Covent Garden Churchyard. He was a sufferer from gout; the immediate cause of death is said however to have been fever supervening upon consumption. About sixty years afterwards a monument was erected to him in Westminster Abbey; also a tablet in the Covent Garden Church, destroyed in 1845.

Butler comes down to us praised for uprightness as well as modesty; presumably the depressed Commonwealth party opined that his uprightness had been made compatible with a large measure of secretiveness, not to say duplicity. He was generally retired and taciturn, though frank and hearty in his intercourse with intimate friends. Among these, besides Longueville, were Cleveland, Hobbes, and Davenant. Aubrey says of Butler: "He is of a middle stature, strong-set, high-coloured, a head of sorrel hair, a severe and sound judgment, a good fellow": and again, "He was of a leonine-coloured hair, sanguine, choleric, middle-sized, strong." As recorded in portraiture, his physiognomy presents nothing to distinguish the author of *Hudibras* particularly from other men tending towards the hard-featured, of solid sense, observant, nearer to ponderousness than vivacity, yet with an under-current of that sufficiently discernible.

Hudibras is the only work of importance published by Butler during his lifetime; to this were added an *Ode to Duval* the Highwayman, and two pamphlets (1659 and 1672) which were ordinarily (and perchance correctly) attributed to Prynne.

After his death three small volumes of his so-called *Posthumous Works* were issued, in 1715; these, however, with the exception of two or three short pieces, were fictitious. His genuine *Remains* came out in 1759, under the editorship of Mr. Robert Thyer; comprising several amusing and curious pieces, chiefly the *Elephant in the Moon* (a satire on the Royal Society and its investigations), yet barely, on the whole, sustaining Butler's repute for wit and wisdom. His Commonplace Book was also preserved, and shows the author's remarkable diligence in noting down at first hand all sort of thoughts and observations. One of his writings, mentioned as existing but never published, was a fragment of a tragedy on Nero.

But after all Butler, as a poet, is *Hudibras*, and *Hudibras* is Butler. This long yet unfinished poem of more than 10,000 verses, is mainly founded, so far as its leading idea is concerned, upon *Don Quixote*, and partly upon the famous *Satire Ménippée*. Cleveland, and Sir John Mennis (author of the *Musarum Deliciæ*), may have given some hint for its mode of versification, which is nevertheless chiefly original. Hudibras himself, as we have seen, travesties Sir Samuel Luke, and through him the Presbyterian religionists and party generally: his squire Ralpho may designate one Robinson, or else Pendle, and through him burlesque the Independents, the sect (as noted in my account of Milton) to which that supreme poet and Oliver Cromwell belonged. Readers of the present day will not at all agree with Pepys in failing to see in *Hudibras* "where the wit lies"; they, like their predecessors for two centuries, discern an abundance and superabundance of wit, as well as of boisterous animal spirits, and grotesque combinations of humour and fancy. But they find the poem laborious and tedious to get through—partly on account of its obsolete and operose detail of general subject-matter, fine points of doctrinal and religious casuistry which have passed far out of modern ken—partly (or indeed chiefly) on account of its

perpetual tone of mock-heroics, incidents ignoble and tiresome in themselves blown up into big verbal dimensions, like the frog that would have inflated himself into bovine size—partly also (and this is indeed implied in what is premised) by the intrinsic ugliness of the whole thing. *Hudibras* is an ugly poem; a poem of surpassing aptness and dexterity, and even pleasantry, of execution; replete with every resource of a richly-furnished mind, and a facile and fantastic humour which knows when to play and when to strike, when to pat its mouse with velvet paws, and when to crunch it with carnivorous incisors; yet an ugly poem after all. Many readers no doubt feel that the things and the men it satirizes are not wholly deserving of satire—that on the contrary the things and the men it implicitly upholds were the more worthy of the taunt, the lash, and the branding-iron. This however is not of so much importance: the manner of the satire repels us more than the matter. Butler degrades before he assaults: the objects of his sarcasm are treated like military poltroons, who are first stripped of their uniforms, and then, and not till then, drummed out of the regiment. We cannot accept ugly poems as positively good poems, nor ugly art of whatsoever kind as strictly fine art. *Hudibras* will always be admired, and will always deserve to be so; it stands as a difficult and hardly-to-be-rivalled model of a particular kind of intellectual effort and skilled work: it is and will be decreasingly read, and such satisfaction as it yields to the reader will more and more class as literary satisfaction—the gusto of a connoisseur—an acquired taste which would be not very reluctantly relinquished even by the person who experiences and nurses it. Butler must ever retain his own plot of ground on the English Parnassus: it is a plot however which the other denizens regard as rather an excrescence and perceptibly malodorous, and, in their loftier moods, Apollo and the Muses turn a resolutely blind eye to that particular compartment.

POETS BORN BETWEEN BUTLER AND DRYDEN.

JOHN CLEVELAND	1613 to 1658.
SIR JOHN SUCKLING.....	1613 to 1641.
SIR JOHN DENHAM	1615 to 1668.
ABRAHAM COWLEY	1618 to 1667.
RICHARD LOVELACE	1618 to 1658.
ANDREW MARVELL	1621 to 1678.
HENRY VAUGHAN	1622 to 1695.

JOHN DRYDEN.

WITH this great protagonist of the poetry of his time, we enter upon what may be regarded as the modern era of our poetic literature. Junior contemporary of Milton and of Butler, Dryden, not only in the quality of his individual genius, but in his whole intellectual atmosphere, seems to be separated from Milton by an indefinite interval of years; and even Butler, for all the free-and-easy unconcern of his verse, and its spirit of grotesque sarcasm, remains so remote from us in the subject-matter of his sectarian hair-splittings, and in the mock-chivalry of his accoutrements, as hardly to fuse into or coalesce with modernism. But in Dryden we fall-in with the man whose profession is literature, who takes up whatever comes to hand suitable for self-exhibition and the occasion of the moment, who writes different sorts of things all with a critical reference —a sense of how he himself ought to do them according to a certain standard, and how others ought to take them; the man who dictates in the world of letters, propounds and argues, has partizans and adversaries; the man who writes miscellaneously for a public of miscellaneous readers. Dryden assumes a position of personal combativeness and general outlook, pursuing varied lines of attempt rather than evincing a truly versatile impulse of faculty; we feel in him the stress of modern society, the shiftings of modern thought, the modern spirit of criticism which tries, in the balance of reasoning opinion and the recognized canons of excellence, himself and

his performances in one scale, and all sorts of other writers and their performances in another, not perhaps too equitably poised.

John Dryden, eldest son of Erasmus Driden (thus was the name spelled in his generation) of Tichmarsh, who was third son of Sir Erasmus Driden, of Canons Abbey, created a Baronet in 1619, was born at Aldwinkle All Saints, near Oundle, on the 9th of August 1631, or perhaps 1632, for the point is not exactly settled. All these places are in the county of Northampton, but the family properly belonged to the neighbouring county of Huntingdon. The father was a Justice of the Peace during the interregnum, and may probably have been in religion a Presbyterian. John was sent to Westminster School as a King's Scholar, and studied under the renowned Dr. Busby. In 1650 he was elected to one of the Westminster scholarships at Cambridge, and he entered that University in May of the same year, being a student of Trinity College. That he took his degree as B.A. in 1653 is a wholly ordinary incident; perhaps somewhat less so that in the previous year, 19 July 1652, he had been put out of commons for a fortnight at least, and sentenced to read "a confession of his crime"; what the crime was we know not, but presumably not a very heinous one, seeing the mildness of his punishment. In 1654 his father died, leaving a widow and some younger children; and John Dryden came into an estate which has been variously estimated at about £60 and about £200 per annum. Allowing for the difference in the value of money, the former sum might be regarded as a moderate income to fall back upon, the latter as a fair competence. Nevertheless, and though there is nothing to show that he squandered his patrimony, Dryden seems to have been always counted poor by others; and his poverty was a matter of frequent complaint on his own part. Three years after his father's death he left Cambridge, and was introduced into a subordinate public office by his maternal

relative Sir Gilbert Pickering, who was a member of Cromwell's Council, and of his House of Lords. Dryden was perhaps his clerk or secretary, and it may be concluded that he adhered at the time to the same political views.

The first known verses of Dryden were written in 1649, being *Lines on the Death of Lord Hastings*, a young nobleman of promise who had died of smallpox on the eve of marriage: here the style is ambitious and extravagant, with many overstrained conceits like a poor imitation of Donne or Cowley. It is not known that he ever again attempted the same style, nor indeed that he resumed writing poetry for the comparatively long term of nine years; his next verses of any consequence being the *Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell*, 1658. So great a subject found in Dryden a poet young indeed, and only beginning to wield his powers like a master, yet not unequal to the occasion. The year 1660 came, and with it came Charles II. to deal with the England left him by Cromwell; to this occasion also Dryden was ignobly equal, and produced his *Astræa Redux*. Not long afterwards he was enrolled a member of the newly founded Royal Society—probably in virtue of some verses of his on modern philosophy prefixed to Dr. Charleton's Treatise on Stonehenge.

We next have to contemplate Dryden in the character of a dramatist; a character which he sustained for many years, with no little acceptance among his contemporaries, although now, and for a century or more past, his dramas barely survive in the quality of literary curiosities, unread save by the fewest, and regarded as marked examples of inflation and artificial inspiration, perversions of a forcible, strenuous, and rich nature. This nature asserts itself notwithstanding, and makes the works the object of active disapproval, rather than negligent unconcern, to those who will still be at the pains to examine them. Energy and capacity abound; the discipline and beauty of proportion, the authentic accent of truth, are deficient. The first of the

plays, printed some years after stage-performance, and probably written in 1663, was named the *Wild Gallant*, a comedy: it was unsuccessful on the boards, and was afterwards considerably altered. The other comedies, mostly in prose, were *Sir Martin Mar-all*, 1668; *An Evening's Love, or the Mock Astrologer*, 1671; *Marriage à la Mode*, 1673; the *Assignation, or Love in a Nunnery*, same year, summarily driven off the stage; *Limberham, or the Kind Keeper*, 1680, prohibited after the third night as indecent, and altered in printing; *Amphitryon*, after Plautus and Molière, 1690, a stage-hit. The *Royal Ladies*, published in 1664, was a rhymed play. With this we may class the tragicomedies: *Secret Love, or the Maiden Queen*, 1668; the *Tempest*, 1670, done in conjunction with Sir William Davenant, and *Troilus and Cressida*, 1679, both, with presumptuous ruthlessness, altered from Shakespeare; the *Spanish Friar*, 1681, a felicitous and very popular composition, which we may reckon as Dryden's masterpiece in comedy, aimed against the Roman Catholics; *Love Triumphant*, produced in 1694 without success, and, with one ultimate exception, the last of his dramatic works. Of rhymed tragedies, or (as he was wont to call them) heroic plays, we have the *Indian Queen*, written in conjunction with Sir Robert Howard, towards 1665; the *Indian Emperor* (Montezuma), a sequel to the preceding, 1667, containing a famous description of night; *Tyrannic Love, or the Royal Martyr*, composed in seven weeks in 1672; *Almanzor, or the Conquest of Granada*, in two parts, an extravagant but fascinating performance, much assailed by the critics of the day, 1672; *Amboyna*, in verse and prose, 1673, written even more rapidly than the *Royal Martyr*, for the purpose of inflaming the English against the Dutch during the war with that nation; *Aurengzebe*, 1675, a drama on a contemporary potentate, about the most elaborate of all Dryden's plays. Some later tragedies are in unrhymed verse: *All for Love, or the World well Lost*, 1678, the story of Antony and Cleopatra,

strikingly though not pathetically treated, and the only one of Dryden's dramas which is still tolerably well remembered; he said this was the sole play which he "wrote for himself": *Œdipus*, 1679, written in conjunction with Nathaniel Lee; the *Duke of Guise*, 1683, with the same coöperation, Lee being the principal writer, composed to uphold the claims of the Duke of York (James II.), whose right of succession to the crown was then attacked; *Don Sebastian*, which is generally ranked next to *All for Love*, acted in 1690, after the author had for some years ceased writing for the stage; *Cleomenes*, 1692. There were also the operas, *Albion and Albanius*, 1685, aimed against the Republicans, and not successful in representation; the *State of Innocence and Fall of Man*, written in a month; *King Arthur*, 1691, the music by Purcell, well received by the public. His very last work was a masque, with prologue and epilogue, written only about three weeks before his death. Altogether the number of Dryden's dramatic pieces, extending over thirty-seven years of his life, was twenty-eight: he did not, however, feel a natural vocation for the stage, and especially not for comedy,—but, as he avowed, wrote only to please, and as a means of subsistence. His profits from this form of composition were not indeed particularly large: it is said that a play seldom produced him more than £100 on the whole. He had contracted, soon after the Restoration, to supply three dramas to the King's Theatre for £300 to £400 per annum. He certainly, however, with all his undisputed fertility, failed to meet this engagement, save in one solitary year. This led the patentees of the theatre to stint his salary, and hence his long intermission of dramatic work prior to 1690.

The practice of writing rhymed tragedies had been introduced in England soon after the Restoration, apparently by Lord Orrery: it was not only adopted by Dryden, but was expressly defended by him in a preface to the *Indian Emperor*, and before that in a *Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry*, which formed part

of a controversy he sustained with Sir Robert Howard. Soon afterwards a more envenomed literary animosity arose. The playwright Elkanah Settle produced in 1673 his rhymed tragedy the *Empress of Morocco*, with signal applause: Dryden, nettled at the success of so disproportionate a rival, wrote a criticism on the play, containing such amenities as the following: "His being is in a twilight of sense, and some glimmering of thought which he can never fashion into wit or English. His style is boisterous and rough-hewn, his rhyme incorrigibly lewd, and his numbers perpetually harsh and ill-sounding. He has a heavy hand at fools, and a great felicity in writing nonsense for them. . . . Sure the poet writ these two lines[1] aboard some smack in a storm, and, being sea-sick, spewed up a good lump of clotted nonsense at once." We shall see as we proceed the further development of Dryden's feud with Settle. Our poet, although he did Shakespeare the disservice of recasting him according to the fashion of a degenerated time, was yet one of his most fervent admirers, as was conspicuously shown in his early *Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry*, recently mentioned, as well as in other writings; he was in fact the first author after the Restoration who asserted the supremacy of Shakespeare, and, following in his vestiges, he advocated the uniting of comedy and tragedy. Most of Dryden's plays were ushered into print with dedications to men of distinction, couched in terms of skilful, sometimes of fulsome, flattery; many of them also had critical prefaces—a plan in which his contemporary Racine concurred, and which has in our own days been a distinctive practice of Victor Hugo. Indeed, Dryden's disquisitions in prose, numerous and frequently long and elaborate, are almost all critical in substance or in scope. In his time criticism was almost a novelty in England. His method was trenchant, decisive, and broad, his perceptions fresh and vigor-

[1] "To flattering lightning our feigned smiles conform,
Which, backed with thunder, doth but gild a storm."

ous, his grasp solid and firm; he said many fine things finely; and his writings of this class had what they merited, a great deal of influence. He had also a high repute for prologues, many of which he indited for other people's plays, receiving at first two, and afterwards three, guineas for the work.

As a dramatist, Dryden was continually accused of plagiarism; nor, prompt though he ordinarily was at self-vindication, self-assertion, and retaliation with compound interest, did he decisively repel this particular charge. The Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Rochester (Wilmot), the two most distinguished wits in the nobility of that time, were among his foes. Buckingham satirized Dryden as "Bayes" in a farce named *The Rehearsal*, in which perhaps Samuel Butler and others assisted —Davenant and Sir Robert Howard being also, as it seems, partly glanced at in this same character. The farce was acted in 1671, and published in print in 1672; and no doubt Dryden smarted, and vowed that his tormentors should smart in their turn. In 1679 a versified *Essay on Satire* appeared in manuscript, and was attributed to Dryden and Lord Mulgrave; it was however not in reality, or not chiefly, theirs, but was wholly or mainly the doing of another Duke, his Grace of Buckinghamshire. Rochester and the Duchess of Portsmouth (one of the king's numerous mistresses) were so incensed at its sarcasms that they hired some ruffians to waylay Dryden, and give him a severe cudgelling, as he was returning home one evening from the coffeehouse. This disgraceful incident had no further direct sequel. Towards 1682, when the Patentees of the theatre were on ticklish terms with him, Dryden was in straits: and to this period probably belongs a letter which he addressed to another Earl of Rochester (Hyde), asking for some post in the Customs or Excise, or a pension for half a year: no result crowned this solicitation.

In following the thread of Dryden's course as a dramatist, beginning towards 1663, and ending only with his life, I have

left aside the other events of his career, literary and personal: to these I must now revert.

In 1667 he published one of his most admired poems, the *Annus Mirabilis*, referring to the preceding year, which had witnessed the Great Fire of London, and some national glories in naval warfare. In 1668 he succeeded Davenant as Poet Laureate, receiving a stipend of £100 a year and a tierce of wine. His poetic masterpiece, *Absalom and Achitophel*, was brought out in 1681; aimed at Lord Shaftesbury (Achitophel) and the faction which, traitorously intriguing against Charles II. (a good enough David for the purposes of Dryden and of party-spirit), and against his heir-presumptive the Duke of York, was egging-on the Duke of Monmouth (Absalom), one of the king's illegitimate sons, to grasp at present power and future sovereignty —windy projects of ambition which, under the reign of James, brought Monmouth in 1685 to the block. In this admirable gallery of changeling portraits, travestied Hebrews and transmuted Englishmen—some of them adulated out of likeness, others branded or traduced out of shape, all bedaubed by the hand of a consummate master—Dryden found occasion to pay-off his old score with the Duke of Buckingham, who figures with fantastic grotesqueness and perfect pencilling as Zimri; Elkanah Settle is more contemptuously assailed as Doeg; and another poetaster, Shadwell, with supreme venom and virulence, ludicrously excessive and sumptuously malignant, as Og. The first part of *Absalom and Achitophel*, which had an immense sale and a mighty resonance throughout the land, and which of course encountered fierce opposition as well as a storm of welcome, was written by Dryden in 1680, at the express desire of Charles II.; not, as the author professed, in the interests of arbitrary power, but of legitimate and established sovereignty. Afterwards others urged him to continue the subject. This he declined, but suggested it to Tate; and the latter executed the second part, including about 200 lines of Dryden's own, along

with his general planning and revision. Shortly before the appearance of Dryden's first part, Lord Shaftesbury had been committed to the Tower; at a later date the grand jury found no true bill against him, and a medal was struck to commemorate this triumph of the anti-court party; and Dryden again, in this same year 1681, came out with a satirical poem named *The Medal*, for which Charles II. presented him with a hundred broad pieces. His next work of importance was the *Religio Laici*, one of the very few poems which he wrote, apparently, for the mere purpose of self-expression, without ulterior object, or some immediate occasion. He here sets forth the sentiments of a moderate and hardly sectarian christian, with an original and still subsisting bias towards natural religion—one of his main positions being the salvability of virtuous heathens. A certain animus against priestcraft and priests is traceable in many of his writings.

Charles II. died in February 1685, and his Roman-Catholic brother James II. ascended the throne: and soon after that event Dryden also announced himself a convert to catholicism. As was natural and inevitable, a deal of satire and clamour on so opportune a change of faith ensued. At the present day we can only say that the change *may* have been perfectly genuine, however suspicious; and that at any rate Dryden adhered to it, with every ostensible mark of sincerity, to the close of his life, and long after a reconversion from catholicism would have been as suitable to his then worldly interests as his original conversion had seemed when it occurred. It is said that as a boy he had been brought up an Anabaptist; which may perhaps be true, but no confirmatory evidence is adduced. It has also been alleged that he thought at one time of taking orders in the English Church—a statement expressly denied by himself in print. His emoluments increased by £100 a year during the reign of the Catholic sovereign, the appointment of Historiographer being added to that of Poet Laureate.

About this time he translated Maimbourg's *History of the League*, and his name appears to a translated *Life of St. Francis Xavier*, also to an answer to Bishop Burnet's *Remarks upon Varillas's History of Heresies*. He was for several years in such repute that something or other from his pen was regarded as almost necessary to the success of any literary undertaking: in this way he wrote prefatory Lives of Polybius, Lucian, and Plutarch, and translated (it has been said intermediately from the French) the First Book of Tacitus. In 1687 he published the longest of all his poems, *The Hind and the Panther;* in which the Hind symbolizes the Roman-Catholic Church, and the Panther the Anglican. The consorting and colloquies of these two church-beasts, their theological arguments and historical disquisitions, their reserved courtesies and frugal meals, make up the strangest and most incongruous jumble which can well be imagined: the reasonings are in themselves speciously expressed, but void of all cogency to a mind that thinks for itself, and declines to be put-off with assumptions and beggings of the question. It is difficult to conceive how any man with the strong sense and intellectual grasp of Dryden could possibly imagine that the conflicting claims of the two churches might properly be embodied in the persons, or discussed through the gullets, of a Hind and a Panther: to narrate our national history in the form of the adventures of the Lion and the Unicorn were fully as reasonable an attempt. He cannot be acquitted of the solecism on the ground of any dictation from higher quarters, for he himself expressly averred that he wrote voluntarily, and without any pressure. The work was composed during the winter of 1686–7, and the beginning of the spring; and was finished about a fortnight after the king's celebrated Declaration for Liberty of Conscience had been promulgated.

The Revolution ensued in 1688; James II. vanished from the scene, and William III. was king; and the Roman-Catholic

Dryden lost of course his post of Poet Laureate, and had to endure the sight of Shadwell—Og, of all men or reptiles in the world—installed in his place. His gorge rose, and he wrote the satire entitled *Mac Flecknoe*—Shadwell being here affiliated intellectually upon Flecknoe, another of the bad or indifferent versifiers whom Dryden contemned. Lord Dorset, in his quality of Lord Chamberlain, had to eject Dryden from the Laureateship: he tempered this reverse of fortune by allowing the poet a certain salary at the time, but this hardly abated the sufferer's complaints. In 1693 Dryden brought out a new version of Juvenal and Persius, with a large discourse on satire prefixed; five of the satires of the former writer, and all those of the latter, being done by Dryden himself; two of his sons, John and Charles, executed one each after Juvenal. Another and more celebrated translation from the Latin soon followed. In 1694 Dryden began his version (termed by Pope "the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language") of all the principal works of Vergil—the *Pastorals*, *Georgics*, and *Æneid:* it was published in 1697—a subscription, then very unusual, being got up for its production. His last volume was the one named *Fables*, containing (besides some works to which the title rightly applies) modernizations of Chaucer, tales versified from Boccaccio, the second *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day* (*Alexander's Feast*), the First Book of the *Iliad* translated, and the Parting of Hector and Andromache from the same epic. Dryden indeed contemplated translating the whole of the *Iliad*, and declared his preference for Homer over Vergil: yet perhaps the non-fulfilment of his project is no great loss to poetry. His Homeric specimens seem to me decidedly inferior to Pope's. The *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, certainly at the present date the most generally read and admired of all its author's compositions, occupied a fortnight in September 1697: it was reluctantly undertaken at the urgent request of the Stewards of St. Cecilia's Feast. The earlier

Ode on a like occasion—which has not the same dramatic impulse and fire, but can hardly be pronounced inferior to the second on any other ground—had been produced in 1687. This volume of *Fables* was put together in fulfilment of a contract to deliver 10,000 verses for £268. 15s., which sum was to be made up to £300 as soon as a second impression of the work should be called for. The volume contains about 12,000 verses, and must therefore have both completed and exceeded the contract. Dryden was in fact, in his latest years, dependent on the booksellers. In the preface to this volume he avers that his faculties are as vigorous as ever,—only his memory in some degree impaired, and that not greatly: and assuredly no writer could be named whose powers continued more constantly maturing and mellowing, or whose work in advanced age exhibits more entire freedom from senility, than Dryden.

He had now for some while been crippled in his limbs; and a neglected inflammation in a toe resulted in mortification of the leg, which put a period to the poet's life on the 1st of May 1700. He was then residing in Gerard Street, Soho. On the 13th he was buried in Westminster Abbey, next to Chaucer. There is an odd story of an interference by Lord Jefferies—ostensibly the act of a well-disposed admirer, but really prompted by forward and intrusive impertinence—having led to confusion and delay in the funeral: the details however are neither very certain nor remarkably important.

Of the facts of Dryden's private and domestic life not many particulars are known. Towards 1665 he married Lady Elizabeth Howard (who survived him), daughter of the Earl of Berkshire, under circumstances which (according to a satire imputed to Lord Somers) were not very honourable to either party. They had three sons. Charles became Usher of the Palace to Pope Clement XI., and was accidentally drowned in England in 1704. John was author of a comedy named *The*

Husband his own Cuckold, to which the father wrote an epilogue containing (among others) the following lines:

> "Like some raw sophister that mounts the pulpit,
> So trembles a young poet at a full pit. . . .
> Nor is the puny poet void of care;
> For authors, such as our new authors are,
> Have not much learning nor much wit to spare,
> And, as for grace, to tell the truth, there's scarce one
> But has as little as the very parson. . . .
> The poet has one disadvantage more—
> That, if his play be dull, he's damned all o'er,
> Not only a damned blockhead, but damned poor. . . .
> You cannot from our absent author hope
> He should equip the stage with such a fop.
> Fools change in England, and new fools arise;
> For, though the immortal species never dies,
> Yet every year new maggots make new flies.
> But, where he lives abroad, he scarce can find
> One fool, for million that he left behind."

Erasmus Henry, the third son, born in 1669, entered a religious order, inherited the family baronetcy, and died in 1710.—Dryden affirmed his own constitution to be saturnine, and not sprightly; he would also appear to have been reserved or even cold in manner, querulous, and somewhat addicted to boasting of his aristocratic friends. One of his enemies says that his conversation was licentious: his writings certainly were so in several instances. This he acknowledged and regretted in the preface to his *Fables*. "I am sensible," he says, "as I ought to be, of the scandal I have given by my loose writings; and make what reparation I am able by this public acknowledgment. . . . I shall say the less of Mr. Collier because in many things he has taxed me justly; and I have pleaded guilty to all thoughts and expressions of mine which can be truly argued of obscenity, profaneness, or immorality, and retract them. If he be my enemy, let him triumph: if he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance." Dryden believed in judicial astrology,

and is credited with having made, according to this system, some prognostications that were wondrously fulfilled: a letter of his, dated in September 1697, shows that he had cast the nativity of his son Charles, and up to that date all had come true. A curt and ill-natured epitaph "intended for his wife" is printed among Dryden's works: it hardly looks worthy of his hand, and was assuredly unworthy of any moderately tender heart.

"Here lies my wife. Here let her lie:
Now she's at rest, and so am I."

On the whole, however, it would appear that Dryden maintained a fair character for moral propriety and domestic affection. Congreve, who knew him intimately, puts forward the finer side of his nature in the following observations, which are probably not only friendly but substantially fair as well. "He was of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, ready to forgive injuries, and capable of a sincere reconciliation with those who had offended him. His friendship, where he professed it, went beyond his professions. He was of a very easy, of very pleasing access, but somewhat slow, and as as it were diffident, in his advances to others: he had that in his nature which abhorred intrusion into any society whatever. He was therefore less known, and consequently his character became more liable to misapprehensions and misrepresentations: he was very modest, and very easily to be discountenanced in his approaches to his equals or superiors. As his reading had been very extensive, so was he very happy in a memory tenacious of everything that he had read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than he was communicative of it: but then his communication was by no means pedantic, or imposed upon the conversation, but just such, and went so far, as, by the natural turn of the conversation in which he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He was extremely ready and gentle in his correction of the errors of

any writer who thought fit to consult him, and full as ready and patient to admit the reprehensions of others in respect of his own oversights or mistakes."

Certainly "modest" and "diffident" are not exactly the adjectives for those qualities which one discerns as uppermost in the writings, verse and prose, of "glorious John," the master of the "full-resounding line": on the contrary, there is a great deal of self-assertion, and an overbrimming contempt and browbeating of other men, their persons, intellects, performances, and opinions. Still, we can understand that, in a certain sense and with some people, Dryden may have been diffident and modest: that he was other than genial, manly, and attaching, we should find it difficult to believe. In his literary character, susceptibility to censure was a marked trait; but he was neither depressed nor disconcerted under such conditions, but of those who "do well to be angry," and who fly headlong to recrimination and revenge. Our poet used to be bled and purged before writing: and one may readily conjecture that there was sufficient occasion for such treatment, and no excessive castigation resultant from it. He dispensed favour to young authors; frequented Will's Coffeehouse, and was arbiter of any literary dispute there. He must have been on terms of acquaintanceship with Milton, who, as Dryden relates, informed him "that Spenser was his original." He does not appear to have been laborious in his own work, nor very much of a scholar, although his writings display a large range of diversified knowledge appositely used: he was negligent and unequal, and perhaps never, after once publishing a poem, returned to it for revision and improvement. One great project, which Dryden never so much as began carrying out, is indicated in the dedication to his play of *Aurengzebe*. He intended to write an epic on an English subject, of date neither close nor remote. This idea is further developed in the preface to his *Juvenal and Persius;* he had designed an epic on King Arthur or the Black

Prince, and in the supernatural mechanism of the poem (then accepted as a necessity for epical work) would have imagined the Guardian Angels of the several kingdoms—which Dr. Johnson not inaptly terms "the most reasonable scheme of celestial interposition that ever was formed." Dryden charged Blackmore with having stolen his subject from him.

The poet's portrait is preserved in the Hall of Trinity College, Cambridge, and shows a face of so much masculine sanity and gentleness as predisposes us to credit all the good, and disregard all the evil, which could be propounded of its original. The features are well-set and comely, and the whole countenance has the breadth of intellectual and personal self-possession—large resources largely and beneficially utilized.

Robustness is the great characteristic of Dryden's poetry; he is often excessive, but it is the excess of faculty, not of endeavour. Whatever he does is done with solidity and superiority: he dominates his subject and his reader, and effects this by the direct unlaboured expression of himself. Animated and resolute conception finds its precise and ample equivalent in nervous diction. The Roman writers nourished his style, which took in his hands such sturdy and full-bodied dimensions as to constitute, though without any extraordinary originality to start with, the nucleus of a new school; the Roman writers far rather than those of the Romance tongues of modern Europe, so prolific in their influence upon preceding British literature. It was doubtless with surprise no less than zealous delight that in his old age Dryden discovered for himself the magic of Chaucer, as in his youth the unapproached profusion and profundity of Shakespeare. His greatest power, hardly exercised until he had reached the maturity of his age, was in satire—satire into which he poured the whole energy of his temperament, even more than the brilliancy of his mind, and which represents chiefly vehement invective, as distinct from the sting and scintillation of epigram or lampoon. The

abounding sweep and resilient strength of his versification form another of his prime excellences; and he may almost be said to have remoulded the English heroic measure—puffing it out to excess, it should fairly be admitted, with triple rhymes and rolling Alexandrines. His were essentially a mind and a hand which grasped and used their materials—educing from them the utmost for his own purposes, and leaving them to his successors drained and flaccid for further service.

POETS BORN BETWEEN DRYDEN AND POPE.

KATHARINE PHILIPS	*c.* 1632 to 1664.
THOMAS SACKVILLE EARL OF DORSET	1637 to 1706.
SIR CHARLES SEDLEY	*c.* 1639 to 1701.
APHRA BEHN	1644 to 1689.
JOHN WILMOT EARL OF ROCHESTER	1647 to 1680.
RICHARD BLACKMORE	*c.* 1650 to 1729.
THOMAS OTWAY	1651 to 1685.
NATHANIEL LEE	*c.* 1655 to *c.* 1690.
JOHN NORRIS	1657 to 1711.
MATTHEW PRIOR	1664 to 1721.
SIR JOHN VANBRUGH	1666 to 1726.
JONATHAN SWIFT	1667 to 1744.
WILLIAM CONGREVE	1670 to 1729.
COLLEY CIBBER	1671 to 1757.
AMBROSE PHILIPS	1671 to 1749.
JOSEPH ADDISON	1672 to 1719.
NICHOLAS ROWE	1673 to 1718.
ISAAC WATTS	1674 to 1748.
JOHN PHILIPS	1676 to 1708.
THOMAS PARNELL	1679 to 1717.
EDWARD YOUNG	1684 to 1765.
THOMAS TICKELL	1686 to 1740.
ALLAN RAMSAY	1686 to 1758.
JOHN GAY	1688 to 1732.

ALEXANDER POPE.

A POET of an artificial age, and of artificial life, who is truly a poet, is a possession to be proud of: England can claim in Pope such a poet of her own. The question whether Pope was a poet was already familiar to critical readers in the time of Dr. Johnson, and was re-debated with some acrimony about half a century ago. Some very able and acute writers of that time, such as Leigh Hunt and Charles Lamb, fervid with admiration for our older authors, and able to appeal to so great an authority as Wordsworth, and to so strong a manifestation as Keats of very different influences in actual poetic production, were then prominent, and not inclined to allow much in favour of such conceptions and methods as Pope had more especially exemplified. The chief champion however of the anti-Pope sect was the Rev. Mr. Bowles, himself an accredited writer of verse. With him Byron did battle: and few things speak more strongly for the intrinsic health and toughness of Byron's judgment than the fact that he, a poet whose genius developed in such entirely different forms, stood up vigorously and unyieldingly for the poetic name and fame of Pope. It may indeed be said that he somewhat overdid the thing, and expressed for "the little Queen Anne's man" an exceptional and enthusiastic homage which might certainly have been tendered with more absolute appropriateness to some other among the great names of England's and the world's literature. But, however this may be, Byron stemmed a flood of semi-sincere and semi-discerning

cavils against the object of his worship, and we should all be grateful to him for having done so, and thus vindicated—across the lapse of a century, and the inevitable changes in direction of thought and models of writing—the essential and indefeasible communion of poetic mind. After Byron, no one need be ashamed to confess, in the face of all idealists, subtilizers, adorers of *couleur locale* or "word-painting," votaries of Nature, mediæval romanticists, or classical purists (and among these classes will be found all orders of mind, from the most exalted to mere hocuspocus-mongers), that he regards Pope as a poet, and even a great one. To consider merely antecedent likelihood, a strong case might be made out for the probable assumption of Pope's being a poet. He was recognized as such by his own generation; and even the most inveterate objectors may be expected to allow that, between the days of Dryden and those of Blake and Burns, there was no one to contest the palm of supremacy with Pope.[1] Now it is *primâ facie* by no means likely that, in a period which we all know to have been one of great literary exertion, more than two generations of men should have passed away without producing one veritable poet; which nevertheless we affirm to have been the case in our country, if we say that Pope beats all his verse-writing competitors between Dryden and Blake or Burns, and yet was himself no poet after all. Perhaps the sum of intellect, and the

[1] I suppose the names that would most nearly be put in competition are those of Allan Ramsay, Thomson, Gray, Collins, Cowper, and by some persons Chatterton (dates of birth ranging from 1686 to 1752): scarcely Young or Goldsmith (1684, 1731). These names I must leave to the suffrages of their respective zealots, conscious that something might be said in favour of Gray, and certain that something *would* be said in favour of Cowper, upon whom, as the reviver of "Nature" in poetry, there has been a considerable run for many years past. For my own part, I could not at all allow the claims of Cowper as making head against those of Pope: but it may farther be observed that the period of Cowper's poetic activity began in fact *after* that of Blake, and only four years before that of Burns, so that he is barely to be reckoned in the comparison, even in point of date.

potentialities of its achievement, are very nearly the same in any one generation as in another; and, after the literary sense has been thoroughly aroused in a country, and the poetic art shown forth and even consummately realized, it is difficult to suppose that the very best man of his time, practising poetry with all the ardour of a genuine vocation, with a corresponding conviction on his own part, with boundless acceptance from his contemporaries, and with uncontested and utterly incontestable skill and mastery of both the intellectual and technical kinds, should nevertheless have been something other than a poet—devoid of that single faculty, or exquisite and inexpressible integer of faculties, which severs the poet from the many men of letters, and qualifies him to be the singer for his own time, and for long processionary years ensuing. The fact is that, in a very artificial age (and such was the age of Pope), an artificial poet is the highest poet attainable: his very artificiality of matter and style is his authentication as poet. This may sound like a paradox: yet it is hardly more paradoxical than the statement that a gold coin is equally gold whether stamped with the effigy of Alexander the Great or of Louis Quinze, of Cromwell or of Charles the Second, of Napoleon the First or Napoleon the Third. The only condition, then, on which we can have real poets in an artificial age, is that they also should be in a measure artificial: on that condition we *can* have them, and in Pope England had one truly supereminent. The artificiality of the age he lived in was to him not wholly factitious: it was his atmosphere, and partly his nature. That he should have been as natural as Theocritus, as terrible as Æschylus, as austere as Lucretius, as supernal as Dante, as knightly as Chaucer, as noble as Milton, was simply and totally impossible: nay, had it even been possible, such a result would in him have been in some degree spurious, for it could only have ensued from his prepensely and pertinaciously going out of his age and of himself—and that is not the process which makes a

poet, or ever did make one. There seems to be something both shortsighted and ungracious in denying the laurel to Pope: shortsighted, for the conditions which affected his poetic position are intrinsically the same which must operate in any and every highly artificial age, and to reject Pope would go far towards the temerity of banning poetry out of all such recurrent periods; ungracious, for he gave us the best outcome of the best mind of his time, and in the best of its forms. Let us then (if I may assume to speak for the reader as well as myself) rest contentedly and gratefully in the conviction that Pope was a poet—the only sort of poet that we were likely to get out of the reigns of Anne and George the First; and moreover, not only the sole sort forthcoming, but an amply good sort for all persons who would enlarge instead of restricting the area of the art, and would fain contemplate the mighty Poetic Spirit working marvellously in all guises and disguises rather than only uttering remote inspirations in some iterated monotone.

Alexander Pope was born in Lombard Street, London, on the 21st of May 1688. His father, named also Alexander, was a linen-draper in the Strand, and acquired a handsome competence. It has been said that he belonged to the same family of which the Earl of Downe was the head: the connexion, however, is dubious, and must at any rate have been extremely remote. The mother, Edith Turner, was a daughter of the Lord of the Manor of Towthorpe, Yorkshire: she was one of seventeen children, and survived all the others—as indeed she well might, seeing that she died at the immense age of ninety-three, living no day too long for the tender affection with which her illustrious son cherished and surrounded her. *He* did not slight her for being "a poor feeble-minded thing," if indeed she was such, nor count her "unworthy any one's care or esteem": these not very feeling expressions are the description of old venerable Mrs. Pope handed down to us by Mrs. Piozzi.

Both Pope's parents were Roman-Catholics, the father being a devout religionist; some have alleged, but no one has furnished proof, that he was a convert to catholicism. Of the large Turner brood, some had been brought up as Catholics, including Mrs. Pope, others as Protestants. The family had been strenuous royalists in the time of Charles I.

Alexander was an exceedingly delicate boy from his birth, and in childhood noted for gentleness. He was "protuberant behind and before," and remained so stunted in stature that, when grown up, he could not sit at table without a raised seat: he was also very nearsighted. In a word, his outer man was a deplorable sample of Nature's handiwork; and, if we stop short of calling him dwarfish and deformed, we concede as much to courtesy as to truth. Yet his face in manhood, lit up with very vivid eyes, could not be called displeasing: the attenuated features were sufficiently harmonious, and in an eminent degree expressive and intellectual. His smile was sweet, but to see him laugh was a rarity indeed.

Pope's father retired from trade on his earnings towards the date of the Revolution of 1688, still at a comparatively early age. At first he lived at Kensington, and then moved off to Binfield, in the district of Windsor Forest. His fortune was about £20,000. As he had conscientious scruples against investing it in Government securities, now that the adversaries of catholicism were so greatly in the ascendant, he simply kept his money by him in a chest, and used it as occasion arose; and a great part of it had naturally disappeared at the time of his death.

The child showed extraordinary precocity: to which perhaps an aunt of his intended to bear her witness when she made him, at the age of five, the reversionary legatee of all her books, pictures, and medals. By the age of seven or eight, up to which time, it appears, he had not gone to school, he was a great devourer of books. When about eight years old he

was placed under a priest named Banister, in Hampshire, and began learning Latin and Greek. Thence he went to a school at Twyford, near Winchester; and afterwards to another near Hyde Park Corner, having left the Twyford establishment in some disgrace, caused by his writing a versified lampoon upon the master—an incident truly predictive of his after career, if the facts have been stated with unembellished accuracy. At the London school he made a kind of play out of Ogilby's Homer, eked out with some verses of his own—another omen, as it might seem: this dramatic cento was acted by his schoolfellows. When about fifteen years old, after an interval of a couple of years at home, he returned to London for some further schooling in French and Italian: it is doubtful, however, whether at any date he fully mastered either language, although he could read a French book with ease. Indeed, it should be understood that, apt pupil as he proved under all his masters, Pope, as a grown-up man, was mainly self-educated, and was never to be called a scholar, whether in modern or classical literature, or in any other study. No doubt, the little Roman-Catholic schools to which, under the legal oppressions then in force, he was practically restricted, were far from being of such a grade as to make the utmost of his shining natural abilities. After a few more months in London he returned to his family at Binfield; and then followed five or six years of close study, mostly of the ancient and English poets.

Pope began writing verses so early that he could not afterwards remember how far back the beginning dated. Melody, indeed, seemed inborn in the mis-shapen body, for in boyhood his voice was so sweet as to earn him the appellation of "the Little Nightingale": in later years, nevertheless, he appeared to be indifferent to music. When he returned home to Binfield from his first London school, aged about twelve, he already aimed to become a poet, making Dryden his chief model f versification: and his father seems never to have thwarted the

lad's inclination, whatever direction of literary or other culture it may have pointed in. One of Pope's earliest poems was an epic on *Alcander, Prince of Rhodes*, begun about his thirteenth year. He wrote some 4000 lines of this ponderous performance; then dropped it, and finally burned the manuscript. Some of the lines, however, appear, and they were good enough to appear unaltered, in the *Essay on Criticism* and the *Dunciad*. His earliest composition, preserved in a complete form, is apparently the *Ode to Solitude*, which is hardly distinguished by any rawness from the mature work of Pope himself, or of poetic writers generally. This preceded rather than succeeded the *Alcander*. Another juvenile effort was the translation of the First Book of the *Thebais* of Statius, executed at the age of fourteen: but even this had been forestalled by other renderings from the same poet, beginning as far back, it is stated, as Pope's ninth year! Other works, the modernizations from Chaucer, a lost comedy and tragedy, might further be cited among the products of his precocity: but to enlarge on this matter were now superfluous.

At the age of sixteen or seventeen Pope wrote his *Pastorals*: these were at once shown about and admired, but their publication only ensued after an interval of five years (1709). Sir William Trumball, of East Hamstead near Binfield, was perhaps the first person to recognize Pope's great literary promise, in 1705: he introduced him to the aged dramatist Wycherley, who so far valued and confided in his juvenile friend as to entrust him with the revision of his miscellaneous poems. The task was probably too faithfully executed, and the natural consequence followed—ruffled self-esteem and alienation. Besides Trumball, Walsh, the poetical writer and critic, encouraged Pope and his *Pastorals;* also Henry Cromwell, an amateur critic and country-gentleman, partly domiciled in London, whose acquaintance Pope made towards 1708, and with whom he carried on a correspondence which afterwards had an im-

portant influence on the current of the poet's celebrity and conduct. It was at the age of seventeen that he preluded his public appearance among literary adventurers by frequenting the noted *rendezvous* of such personages—Will's Coffeehouse in Russell Street, Covent Garden.

The history of Pope's writings is the history of his quarrels. He was far too conspicuously gifted to be an object of indifference to other men of letters, whether magnates, aspirants, or pretenders: those who looked down upon his person with derision had to look up to his pen with envy or trepidation. And he himself, supremely touchy, splenetic, and dauntless, and endowed with a terrific power of the lash, of which he was naturally as conscious as were all the victims who writhed beneath it, was no sooner touched than he was touched to the quick: on his thin skin a scratch was a scarification, and woe be to the wretch who, in spite, wantonness, or inadvertence, happened to inflict it. As we have seen already, he could not so much as oblige Wycherley by annotating the margins of his verse without offending him: and his first publication, the *Pastorals*, soon generated an amount of bad blood such as seems to have been uniformly and surprisingly absent from the Doric competitions of Corydon and Menalchas. These poems were published in Tonson's *Poetical Miscellany*, which volume contained a few other pieces by Pope, and the *Pastorals* of Ambrose Philips. The last-named performances were reviewed with great applause in the *Guardian*, a paper with which Philips, as a zealous Whig, stood in high favour. Pope was nettled at this; and with a delicious ingenuity of malice (which both the moralist and the prudentialist must however note with displeasure, as showing that Pope it was who took the first step, equally superfluous and irretrievable, in that lettered and personal warfare which, passing on from skirmish to skirmish, and from ambush to mêlée, lasted out the remainder of his life) he wrote another review of Philips, contrasting the merits of

his *Pastorals* with those of Pope's own, and professing throughout to give the palm to Philips, although the contrast really presented is manifestly, to a discerning reader, in Pope's favour. The irony was so finely masked that Steele supposed the whole thing to be *bonâ fide*, and, receiving the anonymous article, withheld it out of regard to Pope. It was however published in 1713, also in the *Guardian:* and, its true drift being soon recognized, as well as the hand from which it came, the critique so exasperated Philips that, in an ulterior stage of the quarrel, he hung up a rod at Button's Coffeehouse, threatening to punish his detractor with it. The latter, we may be sure, was not behindhand in hostilities, and incited his easy-going friend Gay to write his well-known *Shepherd's Week* in ridicule of his foe.

The foremost critic of the day, John Dennis, is said to have regarded Pope's *Pastorals* slightingly. With him therefore the poet, in his next publication, the *Essay on Criticism*, tried a fall. This work, written in 1709, was issued in 1711, and Dennis naturally retaliated. Next came the ever fresh and fascinating masterpiece, the *Rape of the Lock*, written in 1711. In its original form, this poem was in only two cantos, which Pope executed in a fortnight: its publication ensued in 1712. It was at a later date that he conceived and carried out the poetical machinery of the sylphs and gnomes—"airy nothings" created by a fancy which has almost passed into frivolity, and all the more genuine for that, in their relation to the entire poetical scheme of the work. Addison, now the arch-ruler in the world of letters, more especially in all its Whiggish regions, to whom Pope was introduced in 1712, and with whom he was on very friendly terms, advised him against introducing this supernatural by-play; and (if we regard merely the structural value of the poem, without being biased by the question of its dimensions, and consequent elaboration and importance) I am not certain but that most readers of the present day would

agree with Addison. The author however stood firm, and carried the public with him; some degree of ruffled *amour propre*, arising from this incident, may perhaps have conduced to the after-breach of amity between the two eminent allies. The briefest reference to the facts whereon the poem of the *Rape of the Lock* was founded must here suffice. The real heroine of the incident, which had recently produced a few wrinkles of excitement on the surface of that shallow pool Fashionable Society, was Miss Arabella Fermor: the author of the "rape" itself was Lord Petre—both belonging to the Catholic aristocracy. Miss Fermor, who shortly afterwards became Mrs. Perkins, was naturally elated by so splendid a celebration of her charms; elated, and yet it would seem also partly offended that a mere nobody of a poet should have made so free in print with her adventures.—In 1713 the poem of *Windsor Forest*, partly written at the age of sixteen, was published. It was about this time that Pope made some attempts in the art of painting, being inclined to add that accomplishment to his more special gift of verse. He studied under the portrait-painter Jervas, and got some of his friends to sit for their likenesses: but he never proceeded far in this occupation, his nearsightedness being a serious obstacle.

The great undertaking of Pope in the translation of the *Iliad*, which led to the most overt acts of his hostility with Addison, was preceded by some other incidents telling in the same direction. In his writing a prologue to Addison's *Cato* (1713) there was indeed nothing but friendliness and handsome literary support; nor yet in his shortly afterwards, when his old enemy Dennis had fallen foul of the pompous tragedy of the Whig dramatist, writing and publishing anonymously the *Narrative of Dr. Robert Norris on the Frenzy of John Dennis* —Norris being a quack physician of the time, and the idea of the skit boldly borrowed from that of Swift upon the prophet Partridge. But it was not quite pleasant to Pope to find Addison

(who may or may not have known the real authorship of the pamphlet, and who had at any rate a right to dislike an excess of volunteered zeal which ran over into scurrility) writing to the publisher to express disapprobation of the performance. The publication of the Homeric translation was definitely projected in the same year, 1713, the work having been commenced in 1712: the first four Books issued from the press in 1715, and the whole came to a conclusion in 1720. The Rev. William Broome and some others helped Pope in the notes. The poet obtained 575 subscribers for his work, and received from it the large sum of £5320. 4s.: this relieved him from many difficulties, and was usefully invested in annuities on his life. The year 1715, which witnessed the publication of the first four Books of Pope's version, saw also the appearance of the first Book in a translation executed by Addison's familiar friend and literary *protégé* Tickell. A far less suspicious coincidence would have sufficed to fire Pope's mind with jealous and angry misgivings. He attributed the rival publication to Addison's influence, and even to the latter's own pen, sneakingly active under the name of Tickell: and in fact Addison did so far espouse the cause of the less famous bard as to affirm that Tickell's *Iliad* "had more of Homer."[1] However, it is not now believed that Addison had any direct concern in Tickell's work. Besides this supposed cause of offence, Pope fancied that Addison had set-on a Mr. Gildon to malign him. Embittered by these ideas, he wrote-off the memorable lines on "Atticus"—or rather the first draft of them—now forming a portion of the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, published in 1735; and he sent the manuscript to his distrusted friend. Whether

[1] No one perhaps knows at the present day—I at any rate do not—whether Addison was right or wrong in this assertion; for Tickell's translation proved but an abortive embryo which, overpowered by the popularity of Pope's, lived no longer than its first Book. But, as Pope's version has little indeed of Homer, Tickell's might certainly have had more, and yet have been a very poor performance.

through shame, fear, or let us prefer to believe through his own substantial guiltlessness, "Mr. Addison used me" (so said Pope) "very civilly ever after"; indeed he wrote in the *Freeholder* of Pope's *Iliad* as competing with Dryden's *Æneid*. The bond of cordiality however was broken, not to be re-knit. Steele endeavoured to effect a reconciliation between the two: but Addison proved to be distant in a personal interview, and Pope was haughty. The translation of the *Iliad* was enormously admired, and gave its writer such a position in the world of letters as perhaps none of his own original poems, however brilliant and popular, would wholly have availed to procure him. It was followed by the version of the *Odyssey*, completed in 1725: the contract for this work was somewhat less advantageous than that for the *Iliad*, nor were Pope's personal labours upon it equally great. Broome and Elijah Fenton, who received between £700 and £800 for their work, while Pope retained about £3700, were his confederates in the translation, the former writing also the notes: twelve Books alone are the work of Pope.[1] Having achieved this task, he determined to translate no more. Between these two translations he had brought out, in 1721, his edition of Shakespeare. It was far from being the work of a thorough scholar in the literature of that period, and, as a standard edition, has sunk into deserved disregard: nevertheless it contains many acute remarks and suggestions, including several conjectural emendations which have been generally adopted. Theobald pointed out the defects of the work: this mortified Pope, and he regretted having ever engaged in so extraneous an undertaking. Neither had Theobald, after a while, much reason to congratulate himself upon having intermixed in it.

We have reached the year 1725, the thirty-eighth of Pope's life; and will now take a brief glance at his domestic cir-

[1] *I.e.* Books 3, 5, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 17, 21, 22, 24: Books 2, 6, 8, 11, 12, 16, 18, 23, are by Broome, and 1, 4, 19, and 20, by Fenton.

cumstances. In 1715 he had persuaded his father to sell the estate at Binfield, and he himself purchased a house at Chiswick, to which he removed with both his parents; and in no great literary personage does deep unaffected filial piety, in the ordinary wear and tear of life, shine brighter and purer than in Pope, the exasperated satirist, courted associate of geniuses and of princes. The father died in October 1717. The mother then, in 1718, removed with the poet to a house in Twickenham of which he bought the lease—being the villa, with its grounds of five acres, which became so famous to contemporaries and to posterity. The grounds received great alterations, and the addition of a "grotto," from Pope's assiduous care; the house itself underwent but little change. Mrs. Pope, as we have already seen, survived till the age of ninety-three, expiring in 1733, when the life of Pope himself was within eleven years of its term. The other enduring affection of his life (apart from friendships with men of letters or of society, among whom he had several close intimates) was with Miss Martha Blount. His relation to this lady has been matter of much speculation, conjecture, scrutiny, and suspicion. The Blounts were a Roman-Catholic family at Mapledurham in Oxfordshire, with whom Pope had been familiar in early youth, from the year 1707. The head of the family was Mr. Lister Blount: his two daughters, Teresa and Martha, were born respectively in 1688 and 1690, and were therefore of very much the same age as the poet. He, it seems, had at first shown a predilection for the elder and handsomer sister, Teresa, and this continued for some years; but eventually he taxed her with prudishness, and also with the very opposite misdemeanour of intriguing with a married man, and his strong liking turned into distinct aversion. Martha then ruled supreme; although indeed at one time, towards 1722–23, Pope appeared to be somewhat enamoured of Miss Judith Cowper, the niece of the Lord Chancellor.

She married another person in the latter year. His intimacies with Martha Blount, who in his later years was to be found domiciled in his house from time to time, were a topic of scandal with many, and the opinions even of his more recent biographers have differed as to the facts, or probable facts, of the case. On the whole, the more likely opinion appears to be that the crippled valetudinarian was not in this instance either a gay Lothario or an *amoureux transi:* he regarded Martha Blount with a sentiment in which love coloured but did not absorb friendship, and she responded with kindred feelings—not, it may well be believed, strictly untrue or self-interested, although it has been strongly affirmed that towards the close of his life she treated him with careless, and on occasion even with callous, neglect. There seems to be no adequate ground for the story that on his deathbed he offered her marriage. What is certain is that he left her the bulk of his property, "out of sincere regard and long friendship for her," as his will said; and what is reluctantly surmised by those who tender his good name is that on one occasion, wishing to make an investment for Martha's benefit, he descended to accepting a sum of £1000 from the Duchess of Marlborough as hush-money to escape the publication of attacks which he had written against the Duke, and probably against the Duchess herself as well. The ineffaceable lines on "Atossa" (*Characters of Women*) would perhaps have been cheaply bought-off by her Grace at £1000: they were suppressed during the author's lifetime, but at his death were found to be already in print, in preparation for a new edition. It should be added that diligent modern investigation has shown good ground for believing that Atossa was not intended for the Duchess of Marlborough at all.

The complicated affair of Pope's letters next demands our attention: it still remains in some degree mysterious, but unfortunately the leading facts are now understood only too

clearly for the poet's reputation. The less the mystery, the less the respect which can be accorded to him. In 1726 Pope's early letters addressed to Mr. Cromwell were published by one of the notorieties of the day, the piratical bookseller Curll, to whom they had been consigned by Cromwell's mistress. In 1735 the same foul bibliopolical hands ushered into the world a volume of the correspondence that had passed between Pope and various friends. The poet—poor injured undesigning creature—tried the effect of a prosecution of the publisher before the House of Lords for breach of privilege, as letters from some of the Peers were included in the volume: but this effort failed. Then Pope, denouncing the inaccuracy of the surreptitious edition, as well as the wrongful interference with his privacy, professed that the only course open to him for self-vindication was to bring out another authorized and correct edition: and this he accordingly produced in 1737. These letters overflowed with friendship, philanthropy, moral rectitude, and the finest sentiments in the repertory: they reflected the highest credit upon Pope in the eyes of an admiring and believing public, and subserved his literary fame as well—the publication of any series of letters, and such well-composed letters to boot, being at that time an innovation. But what if it should turn out that the whole affair of the garbled piratical edition was a got-up scheme of Pope's own—a mere device to satisfy his itch for applause, by paving the way to the production of his own nominally enforced, but in reality forecast and eagerly desired, edition—a plot conceived with as much tortuous disingenuousness as it was based on uneasy vanity, and carried out with effrontery? This, doleful to relate, is what *does* turn out. Curll, and the respectable bookseller Lintot who was Pope's accustomed publisher, testified that they had received simultaneous clandestine offers of the correspondence, before Curll closed with the proposal, and issued the pirated edition: and a painter named Worsdale

professed to have been the messenger who sought out Curll, and this at the instance of Pope himself. When the minutiæ of the authorized edition are examined, this correspondence proves to be hardly more honourable to the writer than the petty scheming connected with the original issue: both equally evince his readiness to use any small arts which would assist him in posing for effect. For instance, Pope induced one of his friends, a Sussex squire of no particular importance named Caryll, to send back the letters which the poet had addressed to him, on the pretext of the danger of their falling into the hands of Curll or some other such pirate: and these same letters appear in the authorized edition, nominally directed to persons of greater worldly consequence than Caryll. In other letters he not only altered passages, but even changed them into the precise contrary of their original purport. The whole of this affair, in its planning, execution, and details, is alike discreditable to Pope: but, while frankly and emphatically allowing thus much, we should guard against an excess of censure, such as some of the most recent explorers of the facts seem to lapse into. Pope, it is plain, plumed himself on his letter-writing (which indeed so good a judge as Thackeray has viewed with cordial admiration, though he does not deny its being in some degree artificial); he felt inclined to produce it to the world; and, not finding any obvious straightforward grounds for doing so, he schemed and finessed until the thing was managed, traversing in the process many quaking bogs of equivocation, verbal and acted, and plunging every now and then into a too undeniable quagmire of mendacity. The small and pertinacious trickiness, in its main purpose unharmful enough, deserved punishment, and has amply received it: for this is, of all the transactions of Pope's contentious life, the one which to the present day raises the greatest clamour of disdain and reprobation.

Another unpleasant episode is his quarrel with Lady Mary

Wortley Montague. This handsome and brilliant lady made his acquaintance soon after his removal to Chiswick in 1715, at which date she was about twenty-five years of age. For a while they saw one another with mutual delight; and Pope ventured to address her ladyship by letter in a style more befitting a lover than a literary intimate of the infirmest physique. It was probably on account of this very personal insignificance, as well as in unison with the manners of the age, that Lady Mary tolerated such a mode of address, to which she replied with a bantering reciprocity: for at the present day no taint of real scandal clings round the connexion, whatever uncertainties may in earlier times have existed. She returned from abroad to England in 1718, and the friendship continued. Finally, however, it ceased: whether brought to a sudden close (as some have intimated) by an open and mortifying repulse on some occasion when Pope's expressions of gallantry exceeded a reasonable measure, or gradually worn away by recurring collisions and contradictions in the commerce of society. Pope, in ceasing to be a friend, became a spiteful enemy, and no one can count to his praise the verses wherein he insulted "Sappho" (*Moral Essays*, Epistle 2): nor was Lady Mary wanting in animus when she retorted.

To return to the sequence of Pope's literary labours. In 1727 his prose work *The Art of Sinking in Poetry* was published in a volume of Miscellanies, wherein Swift also bore a part. A number of authors' names are here given under their initial letters only: those who perceived the cap to fit put it on, and complained of Pope's malicious attack—which he however denied, alleging that the initials meant nobody in particular, and had been inserted at random. It is no marvel that this plea lacked believers. The assailed became in their turn assailants, and numerous diatribes against Pope flowed from the press. The armoury of his satire now furnished forth in

revenge the most terrible of all its weapons, the *Dunciad*. This splendid *chef-d'œuvre* was published in 1728, and in that edition Theobald, who had censured Pope's editorship of Shakespeare, figured as the arch-Dunce: some of the notes were written by Pope's intimate friend, the highly estimable Dr. Arbuthnot. The effect of the satire was gradual, but extremely detrimental to its victims: Thackeray indeed has expressed his opinion that this work, and the others in which Pope and Swift attacked the smaller fry of writers, on whom they fixed the nickname of "Grub Street authors," caused a real direct lowering of the social position of professional literary men, reducing their emoluments, and originating the conception, till then only casual and indeterminate, of the "ragged author." The *Dunciad* was followed up by a series of further attacks on various persons in the paper entitled the *Grub Street Journal* for 1730 to 1737. In 1742 Pope added to the *Dunciad* a fourth Book, using certain materials which had long been in his mind, but which he now, owing to asthma and other increasing infirmities, abandoned the project of moulding into an independent poem. His idea had been to write a series of Epistles as a kind of sequel to the *Essay on Man*, exhibiting the limits of human reason, the different capacities and tendencies of individuals, and other the like subject-matter. This fourth Book of the *Dunciad* was particularly severe on Colley Cibber the dramatist, now Poet Laureate. Cibber replied in a pamphlet, tracing back Pope's animosity to a somewhat remote date, 1717, and trivial circumstance. Pope had in that year been concerned in a play named *Three Hours after Marriage*, which found no favour with the audience, chiefly through the *fiasco* of an incident of two lovers disguising themselves in a mummy and a crocodile. Cibber, in afterwards acting the character of Bayes in *The Rehearsal*, made a sufficiently harmless allusion to this topic of the day, by way of "gag," and thereby roused the ire of

Pope, who had an immediate altercation with him behind the scenes. Cibber's pamphlet now proved a fresh cause of offence; and Pope, issuing one more edition of the *Dunciad*, substituted Cibber as its hero for Theobald—not however taking the trouble of re-adapting to the frivolous playwright the accessory details which had been drawn up to suit the ponderous commentator. This was the last literary act of Pope, occurring in 1743, only a year before his death.

It remains for us to mention the other works of Pope, intermediate between the first and the last editions of the *Dunciad*. His poem regarding the *Use of Riches* (Epistle Four of the *Moral Essays*), published in 1731, was regarded as attacking the Duke of Chandos under the name of Timon. This would have been—or we must probably say was—an ungrateful and wanton act on the poet's part, as the Duke had been at any rate civil and obliging to him, if indeed not munificent, as there is some reason to think: severe reflections were made upon Pope's misdeed, but he denied, without convincing any one, that he had aimed his shaft at Chandos. In 1733, before the appearance of the surreptitious edition of his letters, Pope brought out anonymously the first Part of the *Essay on Man*, a grandiose undertaking which he had been meditating for probably not less than eight years. The real authorship of the poem was not at first divined, many precautions having been taken against identification of it, and consequent hostility: it attained, even in its anonymous stage, a large measure of success. The second and third Epistles of this work followed, the authorship being still unavowed, but now more and more shrewdly suspected: when the fourth came out in 1734, Pope's name appeared on the title-page. Lord Bolingbroke, with whom the poet was now extremely intimate, prompted the general philosophical scheme of the poem: he is said to have laughed at Pope for not perceiving that its positions, if followed out to their logical consequences, were antagonistic to Christian revelation. This

was discerned by M. Crousaz, a Swiss professor, who wrote a criticism attacking the principles of the *Essay on Man* as being nothing better than natural religion. The Anglican clergyman Dr. Warburton, afterwards a Bishop, came forward unsolicited to defend Pope in the journal named *The Republic of Letters*. So opportune a service became the origin of a close intimacy between the two writers: Pope founded Warburton's fortunes, saw in his last years more of him than of any other friend, and left him the copyright of all such published works of his as Warburton had then already annotated, or should thereafter be concerned with. In 1733 Pope brought out his Epistle on the *Use of Riches*, the only writing which hints at his being a Catholic; in 1734, that on the *Characters of Men*, followed by the singularly powerful and fine one on the *Characters of Women*. He projected treating in blank verse an epic subject which seems hardly adapted to his genius—the fabulous legend of King Brut of Britain: he also had an idea of composing a History of British Poetry. These designs were not to be fulfilled.

At the time when Pope had first begun publishing, in 1709, the literary men of the Tory party were in favour: his own early patrons, however, were chiefly Whigs, and the Whig statesman Lord Halifax, subsequently to the fall of the Tories in 1714, offered the poet a pension, which he had sufficient independence of spirit to decline. In the latter portion of his life he was definitely and even closely connected with the Tories, more especially with Bolingbroke after the return of the latter in 1723 from his first exile; and he had ready access to Frederick Prince of Wales, then the hope of all who craved after a change in the politics of George the Second's reign. It may with truth be said that Pope was more of a Tory in his later years than he had been of a Whig in his youth: but in fact he was from first to last alien from politics, and, if he adopted anything of a party tone, it came from his surroundings

more than from himself, nor did he at any time commit himself so far with either faction as to become obnoxious to those of the other with whom he was personally in contact. The year 1723, when Bolingbroke returned from exile, was the same in which Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester, was banished as being concerned in a plot favouring the Pretender: on that occasion Pope, who knew him well, appeared in court as a witness in his behalf. As his political opinions, so also Pope's religious views appear to have been somewhat indistinct. A strict and unbending Roman-Catholic he assuredly was not, and certainly at times his attitude of mind regarding the general body of christian dogma was more sceptical than orthodox: to call him a resolute unbeliever would however be going too far, and he may perhaps on the whole be termed a christian conformist, who sincerely respected and accepted "the religious idea," and aquiesced in the form which this has received from christianity, and, in a minor degree, from the Catholic Church. Atterbury pressed him to relinquish the Catholic for the Anglican form of the faith: but this he refused, being in especial unwilling to pain his mother, then still living. On his deathbed he expressed confidence in a future state: and, being asked whether a Catholic priest should be called in, he promptly assented, though he added that he did not regard such a course as essential. In 1729 he had written to Swift: "I am of the religion of Erasmus, a Catholic: so I live, so I shall die; and hope one day to meet you, Bishop Atterbury, the younger Craggs, Dr. Garth, Dean Berkeley, and Mr. Hutchenson, in heaven." This is a wide extent of comprehension. It is not ecclesiastically orthodox, but neither is it anti-religious, and it is at least charitable.

In 1744 the frail unsightly frame which had for fifty-five years been kindled with so bright and mounting a spirit was visibly wearing away. Pope was always so weak that he wore stays (or, as Thackeray expresses it, "was sewed up in a buckram

suit every morning"): when in a boat on the river, he sat in a sedan-chair. On one occasion, being overturned into the water as his coach was crossing a bridge, he had had a narrow escape with his life. He compared his own form to a spider's: his loving friend Lord Orrery, going a step further, wrote of him one of the most ill-natured designations on record, "Mens curva in corpore curvo." He used to suffer especially severe headaches, which were somewhat mitigated by inhaling the fumes of coffee. He was extremely sensitive to cold. One of his sides was contracted, and he could not dress or get to bed without help. With such a person and constitution, Pope's physical enjoyments must necessarily have been few: it seems he took what he could get, and was too indulgent to his appetite, more particularly as regards eating. Some have even said that the immediate cause of his death was a surfeit of potted lampreys, eaten from a silver saucepan which he regarded with predilection. This is more than dubious: but Dr. King at any rate opined that Pope had shortened his days by partaking of high-seasoned dishes and by drinking spirits. In May 1744 life was flickering down. The poet had attacks of delirium, and was peculiarly distressed by an inability to fix his thoughts. Bolingbroke viewed him with keen commiseration. Spence, the author of the well-known *Anecdotes*, told this sympathizer that Pope, when still rational, was always saying something kind of his friends: and Bolingbroke replied, "I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind" —a judgment which should be counted as some considerable testimony to the poet's credit, as the intriguing and battered politician was not exactly the man to be hoodwinked by mere verbal platitudes of philanthropic geniality. Pope received the last sacraments according to the rites of his Church; he afterwards said, "There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship, and indeed friendship is only a part of virtue." On the evening of the 30th of May 1744 he breathed his last, so

placidly, that the precise moment was not observed. He is interred at Twickenham.

Pope appointed Lord Bolingbroke and the Earl of Marchmont his executors, the former being entrusted with his manuscripts and unprinted papers. These were not given to the public; partly, it appears, because Lord Bolingbroke took great offence at finding that Pope had caused to be printed not only, as authorized, a few copies, but an entire and copious edition, of the pamphlet written by his Lordship named *The Patriot King*. That Pope exceeded his instructions in the matter, and violated his promise, is undeniable: it is not however apparent that he had any interested or mean, still less any hostile or treacherous, motive in this act,—which may therefore most fairly be ascribed to his secretive and scheming habit of mind, as summed up in the phrase quoted by Dr. Johnson, "He hardly drank tea without a stratagem." On the whole he was a faithful friend, and had some genuine attachments—none more so than in the cases of Gay and Swift: he survived the body of the former, and the mind of the latter. In his own family he was, and deserved to be, greatly beloved. His half-sister Mrs. Rackett spoke up for his courage, saying he knew not what fear was, nor is there anything in his career to belie this domestic attestation. Too capable though he certainly was of shuffling and circumventing to attain any aim in view, he never hung back from attacking when an object for his pugnacity presented itself: like that most gallant of small beasts, the hamster, he took all antagonists as they came—mouse, rabbit, horse, bull, wild-cat, wolf, or bear, all were equally flown at and pinned. Yet he was placable too to a fallen foe. In 1733 poor old John Dennis, with whom he had had many a tooth-and-nail encounter, being blind and in distress, Pope wrote a prologue for his benefit-night; the reader who refers to it will not, I think, agree with those who consider it sneering and ungenerous. Some banter,

no doubt, there is: but this appears to be the kindly banter of one who pities and forgives.

Notwithstanding his brilliant powers of wit and of expression, Pope was not distinguished in conversation; nor had he the taste, so prevalent in his time, for card-playing, and other such social if trivial pastimes. He had a fine memory and great diligence, sparing no pains in the revision and polishing of his compositions. It is said that he never printed anything till some two years from the writing of it had elapsed: and in the interim he would pay heed to the suggestions of friends, as well as to his own second thoughts. He was a great admirer of Dryden, and to some extent took that poet's *Mac Flecknoe* as the model of his *Dunciad*. Frugality was one of Pope's characteristics, but certainly not miserliness. He wrote his *Iliad*, as he went along translating, on the backs of letters addressed to him: and there was some degree of stint in the table he spread before his ordinary guests, although at times he would give a truly handsome dinner, well supported in all respects. His income standing at £800 a year, he systematically bestowed £100 in charity. That in his maturer years he lived on terms of great familiarity with many men of high rank and station was no more than the fact. It was open to all people to say as much, and to himself among others, although he may have proclaimed it with increasing frequency, and self-complacency rather more than needful: but he did, and most truthfully could, add the affirmation that he had purchased and secured these intimacies by no sort of servility. Disregard of his own poetry, and indifference to criticism, are two favourite themes in his letters, one as veracious as the other.

Pope may be termed the Poet of the Understanding; not merely in the limited though strictly true acceptation in which Johnson says that good-sense was the fundamental principle of his intellect, but in something of the same spirit in which

Kant (so at least he is generally construed) distinguishes the Understanding, as the faculty for knowledge in man, from the Reason, as the primary or intuitional cognitive power. The range of the author of the *Rape of the Lock*, the *Eloisa to Abelard*, the *Dunciad*, the *Essay on Man*, and the Homeric translations, was certainly not a narrow one, though it appears to the reader more restricted than it really is, seeing that the writer passed all his subject-matter through a somewhat uniform and inexpansive mould of execution: but alike in these several excellent works the Understanding predominates—everything is brought to the test of the judging and comparing mind. We can all say, and say with the utmost truth, that a great creative or emotional nature has a larger share in what is highest in poesy: the riches and strength of Pope were not in that direction. His it was to discern, to analyse, and to express. This he did with admirable force of mind and of speech, and with amplest possession and skilfullest use of such means of poetry as were more specially germane to his time. He will always occupy a great position—the position of that one among the Understanding Intellects who has most clearly appreciated his own true province in Poetic Art, and has wrung from a reluctant and partly a hostile goddess the largest results, conformable wholly to his own mental nature, and in no disproportionate measure to hers.

POETS BORN BETWEEN POPE AND THOMSON.

WILLIAM SOMERVILE	1692 to 1742.
RICHARD SAVAGE	1698 to 1743.
ROBERT BLAIR	1699 to 1746.
JOHN DYER.....	1700 to 1758.
DAVID MALLOCH (OR MALLET) ...	*c.* 1700 to 1765.

JAMES THOMSON.

THE Poet of the Seasons deserved to be born, if not in some scene of natural majesty or magnificence, at least in a spot of rural amenity, away from the dense turmoil of great cities. This boon was accorded him; the place of his birth being Ednam near Kelso, and the date 11 September[1] 1700. His father was the minister of Ednam, a man distinguished for piety. James received his earliest teaching at Jedburgh Grammar-school. Here, and even at a prior date, he attracted, by his taste for poetry, the attention of a neighbouring minister, the Rev. Mr. Riccaltoun, who encouraged his boyish attempts. On leaving this school he went to the University of Edinburgh, and in 1719 became a student of divinity there —not, probably, a particularly diligent student whether in this or in other branches of the scholastic course. His chief care seems still to have been given to the cultivation of his poetical talents. He used (so the story goes) on every New-year's day to burn the verses of the previous twelvemonth, writing at the same time some lines to set forth the reasons—and doubtless of these there was no lack—that warranted the immolation. It was principally by the advice of friends that he had been swayed towards theological studies, with the prospect of afterwards entering the Scottish Church; his father having died in 1720, during the second session of Thomson's University attendance,

[1] In some accounts I find 7 September; but it is not correct.

deeply mourned by him, and his mother with her large family —there had been nine children of the union—having in consequence removed into Edinburgh. This mother, Beatrix Trotter, is described as a woman of no little elevation of character and mind. By birth she was allied to the Hume race, coheiress of a small estate; an enthusiastic devotee, imaginative, and altogether such a person as, according to the fitness of things, might well give birth to a poet. She lived to see her son a man of celebrity.

A small but significant incident is said to have determined Thomson to abandon the ministerial career, and to trust to that of a man of letters, more especially in poetry. In his probation for the Scottish Church he was called on by Dr. Hamilton, the Professor of Divinity, to expound a portion of the 119th Psalm relative to the glory of God. This he did with so much richness and loftiness of language as to entail censure no less than praise. The audience were astonished, and Dr. Hamilton complimented his diction; but reproved it as not being generally intelligible, and so not befitting one whose office it would be to preach the gospel to the poor, and do practical work in an undistinguished sphere. The youth now paid enhanced attention to poetry, but received from his circle of acquaintance at least as much discouragement as support. One of the persons who showed the most faith in his poetical vocation was Lady Grisel Bailie, who was at this time, 1725, sojourning in London. This fact, combining with general and well-weighed considerations as to the true sphere for a poet, as yet unknown, to come forward in and secure recognition, determined Thomson to leave without further delay the Scottish, and come up to the English, capital; for not even Scotchmen had, at that early date, discovered Edinburgh to be "the modern Athens." It does not seem to be quite clear whether Thomson had any definite employment so long as he remained in Scotland: he may perhaps have been

domestic tutor in the family of Lord Binning, and he continued these duties upon his first arrival in London. He travelled by sea; and, on reaching his goal, looked-up his college-acquaintance David Mallet (or more properly Malloch), who was then tutor to the sons of the Duke of Montrose. Lady Grisel, it would appear, did not redeem the more or less definite promises which she had given of promoting the young adventurer's interests; and letters of introduction to some other influential persons, which he had brought with him from Scotland, were stolen from him in the street. Mallet, under these untoward circumstances, was the person to whom Thomson chiefly had recourse for friendly offices; and he gave him, on one important practical point, advice which rapidly set the aspirant on the road to fame.

Thomson showed Mallet the MS. of the poem which was afterwards developed into the *Winter*, concluding the *Seasons*. At present it consisted merely of various detached descriptive pieces: these Mallet advised him to connect into a continuous composition, and so to publish it. This counsel proved eminently judicious. The poem was published by a Mr. Millar in 1726, he having bought the MS. from Thomson at a small price: it was dedicated to Sir Spencer Compton. At first it produced little impression; but two persons of critical repute, Mr. Whateley and Mr. Spence, admired it, and gave it vogue. Still more influential in the same cause was Aaron Hill the poet, a man of considerable position in the world: the adulation with which Thomson requited him, in various letters dated about this time, is beyond all credence and all toleration. At last the hitherto passive dedicatee presented Thomson with a sum of £21, and he obtained introductions to Pope, who conceived a sincere regard for him, and to other magnates of literature and society. Many editions of the *Winter* succeeded one another. In 1727 the author published also the *Summer*, and his *Britannia*, and the poems *To the Memory of Newton*

and *On Death*. The *Britannia* identified Thomson with the interests of the opposition: it was aimed against the ministry, on account of their not checking the Spanish aggressions in America. In his encomium of Newton, he obtained some guidance from the scientific knowledge of Mr. John Gray, afterwards Rector of Marischal College, Aberdeen. In 1728 the section of *Spring* followed; and the entire poem of the *Seasons* was completed in 1730 by the addition of the *Autumn*. Meanwhile, in 1728, the tragedy of *Sophonisba* had been brought out, and played at Drury Lane: Mrs. Oldfield acted the heroine. The drama had excited great expectations, but secured scanty success. We have all read the anecdote of the singularly unfortunate line,

"Oh Sophonisba, Sophonisba! oh!"

which (reproducing as it does a cadence in the last act of *Othello*) was ridiculed by the tempting parody,

"Oh Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson! oh!"

Agamemnon ensued after *Sophonisba;* then *Edward and Eleonora, Tancred and Sigismunda*, and finally *Coriolanus:* Thomson's works in a dramatic form are completed by the masque of *Alfred*. *Edward and Eleonora* was offered for acting, but prohibited: the reason being that it contains various allusions applicable to the then Prince of Wales, and his attitude as head of the opposition. One of the ministerial writers remarked that, in this play, Thomson "had taken a *Liberty* which was not agreeable to *Britannia* in any *Season*." As to the dramas generally, it may be said that a Quixotically-minded reader who might make the attempt of reading these long-extinct performances would assuredly not find his enterprise in any degree repaid: words of critical comment would therefore be equally wasted. The *Agamemnon* was produced on the stage in 1738, Quin acting the Grecian king: it is said that Thomson attended on the first night, seated in the upper gallery, and was so in-

terested in his own production as unconsciously to follow the actors with audible recitation of the lines, until he was checked by the bystanders. In the masque of *Alfred* he had the co-operation of Mallet. This composition contains the celebrated lyric of "Rule Britannia," of which it would appear that the authorship should be ascribed to Mallet rather than to Thomson himself. *Tancred and Sigismunda* (founded on a story in *Gil Blas*) was the most successful of Thomson's pieces on the stage: Garrick and Mrs. Cibber appeared in it, and it continued as an acting-piece up to 1788, if not later. *Coriolanus* was not produced during the author's lifetime: shortly after his death it was played for the benefit of his sisters.

These brief details concerning the dramatic pieces have diverted us from the consecutive narrative of Thomson's life—which indeed presents the fewest incidents for record. The only occupation he ever took up, not immediately proper to his own work as a poet, was that, after ceasing to be domestic tutor in Lord Binning's family, he served in the like capacity to a young gentleman in Little Tower Street: this was relinquished not later than early in 1727. In 1729 he went abroad as the travelling companion of the Honourable Charles Talbot, eldest son of the Lord Chancellor, and thus visited most of the countries and courts of Europe. On his return, the poem of *Liberty* formed his chief occupation for two years. Thomson, whose patriotic feelings were lively, regarded it as his finest work: an opinion in which—as has been the case with more poets than one—the author differed from the reading public, with whom this performance never became popular.[1] It was issued in separate parts: the *Italy*, *Greece*, and *Rome*,

[1] Aaron Hill, however, professed a huge admiration of the poem. He said in a letter to Thomson: "I look upon this mighty work as the last stretched blaze of our expiring genius. It is the dying effort of despairing and indignant virtue, and will stand like one of those immortal pyramids which carry their magnificence through times that wonder to see nothing round them but uncomfortable desert."

successively in 1735, and *Britain* and *The Prospect* in 1736. Lord Lyttelton undertook the not wholly unbefitting, yet somewhat thankless and unremunerative, task of shortening this poem; and it has since then been mostly republished in its abridged form. About this time (perhaps in 1734) Thomson received an appointment to an office that was little more than a sinecure, that of Secretary of Briefs. His tenure, however, was of no long continuance. Lord Chancellor Talbot died in 1737, and Hardwicke succeeded him: Thomson—whether through modesty, mere inertness, or whatever other cause—failed to solicit a renewal of the nomination, and thus he lost it. After no very long interval, Frederick Prince of Wales bestowed a pension of £100 per annum on our author, who had already dedicated to him the poem of *Liberty:* he had meanwhile been somewhat straitened in means, and found it expedient to intimate to the Prince that his affairs were "in a more poetical posture than formerly." The pension was revoked towards 1748, in consequence probably of some pique which the Prince felt against Thomson's chief patron, Sir George (afterwards Lord) Lyttelton. Towards 1745 he obtained another post, being appointed by Lyttelton to the office of Surveyor-General of the Leeward Islands: this berth brought him in a clear annual income of £300, after deducting the pay of his deputy—for it need hardly be said that the Leeward Islands remained to Thomson a *terra incognita.*

There is only one other incident to be named in his career—the publication in 1746 of his *Castle of Indolence*, after many years' working and polishing—an amount of labour greater than he appears to have bestowed on any other of his poems, which were generally subjected to but little revision. The *Castle of Indolence* had at first been begun merely as a slight personal raillery upon himself and some of his friends. His death followed not very long afterwards. Returning one evening by water from London to his residence in Kew Lane, he

caught cold, which led on to a fever, and he expired on the 27th of August 1748. He lies buried in Richmond Church. A monument was moreover erected to his memory in Westminster Abbey in 1762, out of the profits—which even in his lifetime were not inconsiderable—accruing from his works. Indeed he died in what might be termed a condition of affluence, though not wholly free from debts.

Thomson was above the middle size, of a fat and bulky form; with a face that might almost be called dull, and an uninviting heavy look, although in his early youth he had even been counted handsome, and his eyes were expressive. He was mostly taciturn, save in the company of his familiar friends: with them he was cheerful and pleasant, and he secured their attachment in an eminent degree: the poet Gray held a distinguished place among them, though he was Thomson's junior by sixteen years. In acts of beneficence he was open-handed to the utmost extent of his means: but to intercede with others for any such purpose was a labour insupportable to his retiring sluggish temperament. Unaffected and simple, he was also to some extent self-indulgent; he liked his ease and his pleasure, and would take of these whatever Fortune was so propitious as to allow him. Richard Savage, who was much in Thomson's company, has mentioned that a lady of his own acquaintance, to whom Thomson was personally unknown, once guessed, from an admiring perusal of his works, that he must be an ardent devoted lover, a great swimmer, and markedly abstinent. Savage, however, had to correct the inferences of enthusiasm, and to inform the fair one that the bard of the *Seasons* and of *Liberty* knew no love beyond the universal appetite of sex, had perhaps never been in cold water in his life, and cherished bodily comforts as far as his means permitted. In some other respects the testimony of Savage was wholly in favour of Thomson: he praised his social qualities, and the steadiness of his friendship, especially for old acquaintances whom he had

outstripped in the career of worldly prosperity. He was besides free from all literary jealousy or malignity; and preserved an unruffled temper, unless his indignation were excited by evidences of cruelty or hard-heartedness in others. Thomson lived unmarried. At one period of his life, however, towards 1743, he had a great desire to change his single condition, and courted the lady whom he has celebrated as "Amanda." This was Miss Young, daughter of Captain Gilbert Young, of Gulyhill, Dumfries-shire. The poet's pecuniary position was not considered sufficiently firm, and Miss Young married Vice-Admiral John Campbell. It may be added that a letter belonging to the last year of Thomson's lifetime (4 October 1747) has been preserved, addressed to one of his sisters, in which he says that he had not married in his earlier days on account of uncertainty in his means of subsistence, and that he now felt himself to be past the matrimonial age, yet might perhaps, at no distant date, seek a wife in his native Scotland.

Although the anecdote of the loftiness of his diction in his student-time might have led to a contrary surmise, and his voice was naturally effective, it is said that Thomson was a very slovenly elocutionist when he had to pronounce anything of a dignified kind: he was once perusing some of his lines to Bubb Doddington, who was reputed to excel as a reader, and who was so annoyed at the poet's deficiency as to snatch the MS. from his hands, observing that Thomson did not understand his own verses. He was fond of the fine arts, and especially of music; and would listen for an hour together to the singing of nightingales. His general mode of living was marked by simplicity, not uncombined with elegance. He is reported to have written better in autumn than at other seasons of the year, and at night than in the day.

Thomson was not a christian in religious belief: this is plainly shown by a letter which Lord Lyttelton addressed to him in 1747; indeed, his lordship had composed his *Observa-*

tions on the Conversion and Apostleship of St Paul partly with a view to proselytizing the poet. After the death of the latter, Lyttelton wrote: "Thomson, I hope and believe, died a christian: had he lived longer, I don't doubt but he would have openly professed his faith." The foundation for any such confidence seems to be very scanty. It should be understood nevertheless that Thomson was a firm believer in Providence, and in the immortality of the soul, which he conceived to be destined for progressively augmenting bliss.

Lord Lyttelton said of Thomson that he had written

> "Not
> One line which dying he could wish to blot."

Johnson—who, speaking of the poet as a contemporary, was more likely to be struck by this point, and to estimate it rightly, than a reader of the present day—considered him very original; original both in the turn of thought, and in the form and execution of his poems. At this date, the time for criticizing Thomson is long past; his place is well fixed, and he will retain it for so long as good poetical work of the secondary or tertiary order continues a living thing. Already, indeed, the general mass of his performance is defunct: the *Seasons* and the *Castle of Indolence* — certainly not his own favourite composition *Liberty*—survive with other than a galvanic life. The *Castle of Indolence* is generally regarded as the more finished and excellent production of the two: the *Seasons*, however, are very greatly more important, and this not only in respect of length. To have selected a subject so vast and universal, and so open to the sympathies and perceptions, and amenable to the personal experience and judgment, of all sorts and conditions of readers in all times, was no small achievement, nor deserving of scantly grateful recognition. It may be even regarded as one of the privileges and distinctions of English poesy that the Poet of the Seasons should have been British in birth and tongue. Such a subject was free of access to every language

under heaven: in any nation a poet *might* have arisen to mould this theme into song, and give it the hues of his own nationality, but it was in British soil that he *did* arise. And certainly Thomson is one of the men to whom has been given that almost impossible prerogative—

"To add a sweetness to the violet."

For generations past, as the magic of Nature unrolls its annual recurrences and vicissitudes, some beauty or some majesty has here and there, by this person and by that, been more keenly perceived, more deeply loved, or acknowledged with a more fully realized sense of awe, because of something written by Thomson. He has been one of the concentrators and intensifiers — one of the fixing and fashioning spirits — of that characteristically modern passion, the love of scenery. A shabby copy of the *Seasons* was once observed by some one laid on the window-seat of a country ale-house: "That's true fame," remarked the man. And perhaps a similar incident might even at the present day be likely enough, and bring the same words to one's lips: certainly, within living memory, it would have been altogether likely. Our progenitors, to the fourth and fifth step of ascent from our own time, have delighted in Thomson; and, notwithstanding the shifting of literary models, and of the tenor of public taste, our successors, to as remote or a remoter term, may probably do the same.

POETS BORN BETWEEN THOMSON AND GRAY.

CHARLES WESLEY	1708 to 1788.
SAMUEL JOHNSON	1709 to 1785.
WILLIAM SHENSTONE	1714 to 1763.

THOMAS GRAY.

Of all short poems—or indeed of all poems whatsoever—in the English language, which has been, for a century and a quarter past, the one most universally, persistently, and incessantly reproduced and quoted from? I suppose, beyond rivalry and almost beyond comparison, the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard* of Thomas Gray. Such is the glory which has waited upon scant productiveness and relative mediocrity — though undoubtedly nobly balanced and admirably grown and finished mediocrity—in the poetic art. The flute has overpowered the organ, the riding-horse has outstripped Pegasus, and the crescent moon has eclipsed the sun.

Thomas Gray was born in Cornhill, London, on the 26th of December 1716, the fifth child, and the only one that survived infancy, out of a large family of twelve. His father, Philip Gray, was a citizen and money-scrivener of respectable standing. His mother was sister to a Mr. Antrobus, who was an assistant master at Eton during the period which Thomas passed at that school—for there was he educated (as we all know from his *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*), staying until the autumn of 1735, when he proceeded as a pensioner to Peterhouse, Cambridge. Both at school and at the university he was supported entirely from funds supplied by his mother; for his father, a violent-tempered person of little principle, refused all assistance towards his education—thinking probably that Greek and Latin, culture and intellect, had little to do with

those ascending grades in the realization of the human *summum bonum*, the scrivening and the pocketing of money. Gray remained at Cambridge up to September 1738; hating mathematics, disliking the college discipline, not very diligent as yet in any form of study, but attracted from early youth to poetry, and attending in fair measure to classics and modern languages. Here he executed a few Latin poems and English translations. His earliest verses in his native tongue were about 110 lines translated from Statius in 1736; and towards the same time he produced some verses on the Marriage of the Prince of Wales, which were considered the best in the academical collection.

On leaving Cambridge he came back to London, taking chambers in the Inner Temple, and intending to study law. But this purpose was speedily suspended by an invitation which he received from Horace Walpole, his friend at Eton and at Cambridge, to travel with him on the continent. The tour began in the Spring of 1739, and they journeyed together through France and a part of Italy. At Florence, and on the road thence to Venice, they had some differences, and parted. Walpole was ready enough in after years to take the blame to himself, and he reflected upon his colleague only so far as to say that he was "too serious a companion"—Gray being all for antiquities in the tour, and Walpole for balls and plays: it seems probable however that the too serious companion had also been a little inclined to lay down the law with authority, and to exhibit a cultured superciliousness towards any attempts of Walpole to entertain and express an opinion of his own. They had been together at Florence, along with Mr. (afterwards Sir Horace) Mann, the British Envoy; at Rome, Naples, and Herculaneum, discovered but recently; and again for another eleven months at Florence. After the separation Gray went on to Venice; in September 1741 he returned to England.

He had not been long back when his father died. The latter had been extravagant, and Gray found that narrow means would hamper him in pursuing the study of the law. He therefore gave this up entirely, and not perhaps very reluctantly; returned to Cambridge; and in 1742 took his degree as B.A. in Civil Law. One of his intimates, both at Eton and afterwards, had been Mr. Richard West, son of the Chancellor of Ireland, and author of an *Ode to May;* he had dissuaded Gray from completing a projected tragedy on the story of Agrippina. This gentleman died in June 1742, greatly to the sorrow of his friend, who commemorated his loss in an admired sonnet. As it happened, Gray had already inscribed to West his *Ode to Spring*, before he knew of the young man's death; and he now began to poetize with some assiduity. His *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, and the *Ode to Adversity*, were written soon afterwards; and about the same time, probably, he commenced the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard.* He also undertook, but never completed, a Latin poem *De Principiis Cogitandi:* there is reason to infer, indeed, that his early ambition was to excel rather in Latin than in English verse, and he was very copious in his phraseology in the classical tongue. He was passing some weeks at Stoke Pogeis near Windsor, in the secluded dwelling-house of his aunts, at the time when the composition of the *Elegy* was going on most actively: hence he returned to Cambridge, and continued residing there for the great majority of his remaining years. He was at first settled in Peterhouse; but in 1756, some of his more youthful neighbours having persistently annoyed him by clamorous interruptions and indecorous pranks, and no adequate redress being forthcoming from the college authorities, the poet removed to Pembroke Hall. His first published work—beyond the youthful essay already adverted to—was the Eton ode, which appeared in 1747: it excited no particular notice.

At Cambridge for six years Gray applied himself to the study

of the best Greek writers. He was displeased at the ignorance and dullness which he found rife in the University; and he wrote a fragment, intended seemingly as a satirical hymn to Ignorance, beginning,

"Hail, horrors, hail, ye ever gloomy bowers."

Towards 1744 he seems to have intermitted writing altogether. Walpole, who had ere now become reconciled to Gray, endeavoured to persuade him to publish such poems as he had already produced along with those of their deceased friend West: but this project did not find favour in Gray's eyes. In 1747 he made acquaintance with the Rev. William Mason, then a scholar of St. John's College, the author of the *Monody on the Death of Pope*, the *English Garden*, and many other poems more acceptable to his own generation than to ours. The acquaintance ripened into a lifelong intimacy; and Mason, after his friend's death, superintended the reissue of his poems, and wrote his biography.

The publication of the *Elegy* was at the moment, as it remains to this hour, the most salient event in the life of the studious and unbustling Gray. This poem was completed in 1750. In February 1751 the author was vexed to find that it had been published without his sanction in a serial named *The Magazine of Magazines*, and was already attracting some attention; and he asked the bookseller Dodsley to reproduce it in an independent form, and anonymously. He required also that it should appear (but an affectionately admiring posterity has been deaf or callous to his wish in this respect) "without any interval between the stanzas, because the sense is in some places continued beyond them." The authorized republication ensued accordingly, and the poem became at once immensely popular, raising Gray, from the position of a scholar wholly unknown outside of his own academic circle, into that of a poet second to none of his contemporaries. Eleven editions followed one another in the most rapid succession.

In 1755 Gray finished his *Ode on the Progress of Poetry*, and about the same time he began *The Bard*, destined to a celebrity only inferior to that of the *Elegy:* these were both intended to be "vocal to the intelligent alone"—and indeed, when he first published them, which was not done until 1757, it seemed as if they would prove highly unvocal to the unintelligent, or in other words to ninety-nine readers out of every hundred. But Bishop Warburton and David Garrick praised the poems, and other authoritative voices followed suit from time to time; till at last that semi-teachable and semi-believing body the general public, indifferently well convinced on the whole, found out that it too was of the same opinion.

Meanwhile the gravest of the poet's personal afflictions had befallen him, in the death of his mother, which took place in March 1753; a loving son during her lifetime, he cherished her memory with glowing affection. In a letter addressed to the Rev. Mr. Nicholls, dated apparently in 1766, he forestalled the famous phrase of Byron under the like bereavement. "In one's whole life," he says, "one can never have more than a single mother"; and he adds—"I never discovered this (with full evidence and conviction, I mean) till it was too late; it is thirteen years ago, and seems but as yesterday, and, every day I live, it sinks deeper into my heart."

On the death of Colley Cibber in 1757, the Laureateship was offered to Gray by the Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Devonshire; but he, opining that the office had derived small lustre from its recent incumbents, thought fit to decline. As we have seen, the only poem of much consequence that he had published before this very year was the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, itself a brief composition of not many stanzas, preceded by the Eton Ode, and followed by two other Odes, as yet in no way popularly accepted. We must therefore allow that, even in the unpoetical central years of the eighteenth century, some of the people in authority were capable of show-

ing no little amount of discernment and of opportune self-reliance, otherwise no such proffer could have been made. The Lord Chamberlain of 1757 knew upon whom to pitch as the permanently famous poet of the time. We shall thus be the less disinclined to forgive the officials if, after making the abortive proposal to such a poet as Gray, they made another and not abortive proposal to such an one as Whitehead, who, being well contented to accept, became the Laureate of our crown and nation, somewhat to the amazement of these latter days. Soon after this, Gray, for about three years, left Cambridge, and lived in London near the British Museum, studying. In 1762 he failed in an application for the Professorship of Modern History and Languages at Cambridge: a chair which had been founded, with a stipend of £400 a year, as far back as 1724, but which had hitherto always remained a perfect sinecure. His success, however, was only deferred; in 1768 the same professorship was bestowed upon him unsolicited. It is annoying to learn that, as he found the post a sinecure, so he left it: he designed to lecture, but never did so—never indeed went beyond sketching out a plan for his inauguration-speech. This was grievous to Gray himself; he blamed his own inertia, and continued to dally and procrastinate, until at last, after three years' tenure of the professorship, for him too did the night come when no man could work. Ill-health—he had become subject ever since 1754 to recurring attacks of gout—was no doubt partly the cause and the palliation of his dilatory supineness; a certain academical scrupulosity, and disinclination to set-to with vigour and resolution, also contributed to the same end. This was thoroughly ingrained in Gray's character and habits. Want of learning, insufficient equipment for the onerous undertaking, was certainly not the reason. An admirer, not unqualified to express an opinion, could even go so far as to say that Gray was perhaps the most learned man in Europe. According to the standard of his time,

he knew profoundly some sciences, such as zoology and botany —history, archæology, heraldry, metaphysics, politics; he was versed in moral philosophy and in criticism; and was a man of recognized taste in the fine arts of architecture, painting, and engraving, and in gardening. His architectural studies had been particularly active towards 1758, and he assisted Bentham in his *History of Ely*. At one time he thought of publishing an edition of Strabo; and he left for this object many notes and geographical disquisitions, which were afterwards edited by Mathias, along with notes on Plato and Aristophanes. Reading—perpetual reading—was in fact his main occupation; to write was comparatively exceptional.

The quiet life of Gray—studious, secluded though not unsocial, and uneventful in the strictest sense, for he seems to have been free as well from internal throes as from external adventure and agitation—presents little further matter for record. In 1765 he made a tour in Scotland for health's sake, and here he knew Dr. Beattie, the author of the *Essay on Truth*, and of the poem *The Minstrel*, both published soon afterwards: Gray wrote an account of this excursion, showing that he had appreciated all the sources of interest it presented, in Nature, art, and historic reminiscence. In 1769 he went to Westmoreland and Cumberland, also for health. In 1771, suffering much from violent cough and extreme depression of spirits, as well as from his hereditary gout, he came to London towards the end of May, and stayed at Kensington; but he was soon back in Cambridge again. Dejection was indeed nothing new to Gray, as we all know as soon as we recollect his line in the *Elegy*—

"And Melancholy marked him for her own."

As far back as August 1737 we find him writing to West, with pathetic self-raillery:—"Low spirits are my true and faithful companions. They get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do; nay, and pay visits, and will even

affect to be jocose and force a feeble laugh with me: but most commonly we sit alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world." Now, in 1771, the end of low spirits and of all else was impending. On the 24th of July in that year he was seized with nausea, while at dinner in the College Hall; and on the evening of the 30th an attack of gout in the stomach put a period to his life. He lies buried in a vault in Stoke Pogeis churchyard, near the chancel-door, being joined in death with his mother, and with one of the aunts in whose house he had been dwelling while the *Elegy* was in course of composition. And so Gray rests on the scene of his greatest triumph, like a warrior on his final and victorious battlefield.

Gray on Himself—he has left a few lines thus entitled—is worth quoting.

> "Too poor for a bribe, and too proud to importune,
> He had not the method of making a fortune;
> Could love and could hate, so 'twas thought something odd;
> No very great wit, he believed in a God.
> A post or a pension he did not desire,
> But left church and state to Charles Townshend [1] and Squire."

Under a jocular form, these lines seem to present a very fair picture of the author, so far as they go. He was essentially a man of virtue and humanity; not eager for money or *éclat*; helpful to the poor; amiable, temperate, and unpresuming. Though he "could love and could hate," his affections were perhaps cool rather than otherwise, his disposition sedate. He had a healthy indifference to criticism, but it was to some extent a weakness that he wished (like Congreve) to be looked upon as a private independent gentleman who read for his amusement, rather than as a professional man of letters. His greatest defect, says the masculine Johnson, was "an affecta-

[1] The Hon. Charles Townshend, born 1725, died 1767; Secretary at War, Chancellor of the Exchequer, &c. Of his deportment as a Member of Parliament, Burke said: "He conformed exactly to the temper of the House, and he seemed to guide because he was always sure to follow it."

tion of delicacy, or rather effeminacy, and a visible fastidiousness, or contempt and disdain of his inferiors in science." This effeminacy was indeed mostly put on in the company of people whom Gray did not wish to please: it seems however that he was careful of himself to the extent of timorousness, and we are told that, when he was in the Lake-country, this backwardness made him miss the finest views. He had also the indolence natural to a placid and unenterprising scholar. Let us enjoy here—on more accounts than one—his description of the only occasion (or he affects to speak of it as solitary) on which he saw the sun rise: he had been making a trip on the south-west coast in 1769. "I must not close my letter without giving you one principal event of my history; which was that, in the course of my late tour, I set out one morning before five o'clock, the moon shining through a dark and misty autumnal air, and got to the sea-coast time enough to be at the sun's levee. I saw the clouds and dark vapours open gradually to right and left, rolling over one another in great smoky wreaths, and the tide, as it flowed gently in upon the sands, first whitening, then slightly tinged with gold and blue, and all at once a little line of insufferable brightness that (before I can write these five words) was grown to half an orb, and now to a whole one too glorious to be distinctly seen. It is very odd it makes no figure on paper: yet I shall remember it as long as the sun, or at least as I endure. I wonder whether anybody ever saw it before: I hardly believe it."—In conversation with intimate friends Gray was learned and witty; but his talk was mostly scanty, and somewhat stilted as well. If Walpole (or his informant Lady Ailesbury) is to be believed, the poet, on passing a day in the society of her ladyship and others, "never opened his lips but once, and then only said, 'Yes, my lady, I believe so.'" His religious opinions are not very definitely known. His own expression that "he believed in a God" may suggest to some readers that he believed in not much more: one may

peruse many of his letters, and find that, though religious considerations are sometimes raised, the christian faith forms no element in them. None the less he appears, with the true temper of an academic scholar, conservatively indifferent and unaggressive, to have been hostile to any general dissemination of sceptical or subversive opinions. In a letter to Beattie, dated in 1770, *àpropos* of the *Essay on Truth*, written in opposition to Hume and the sceptical system, he says: "I have always thought David Hume a pernicious writer, and believe he has done as much mischief here as he has in his own country. A professed sceptic can be guided by nothing but his present passions (if he has any) and interests."

Gray's habits of writing are however more to our purpose than his religious views. In replying, in 1758, to Mr. Wharton, who had asked him to compose an epitaph on a deceased child, he observes: "I by no means pretend to inspiration: but yet I affirm that the faculty in question is by no means voluntary; it is the result, I suppose, of a certain disposition of mind which does not depend on oneself, and which I have not felt this long time. You, that are a witness how seldom this spirit has moved me in my life, may easily give credit to what I say." This does not amount to very much more than what we already knew—namely, that the total bulk of Gray's poetical writings is extremely small; but it may serve also to satisfy us that he was contented with writing little and well, and did not attempt to force his vein when it showed no symptom of flowing spontaneously. We are told also that his custom was not to scribble rough drafts, and correct them afterwards, but he would labour up each line from the first.

Of poems so enormously well known as Gray's—few in number, and none of them long, nor near to being long—it is difficult to say anything that shall be true without being a truism, or that shall be new without being a paradox. The *Elegy* and the *Bard* stand foremost of all: there are also the *Ode on the*

Spring, on a *Distant Prospect of Eton College*, the *Progress of Poesy*, and the sportive effusions, *A Long Story* (fragmentary), and *On the Death of a Favourite Cat*, Horace Walpole's tortoise-shell puss drowned in 1747 in a tub of gold fishes. It may perhaps be said that a certain inward rapture is a distinctive character of Gray among poets; but, owing to the measured, over-castigated, artificial literary tone of the period, he does not allow this rapture to soar out with fervid spontaneity and majestic demonstration, and it therefore takes a form to which we might be permitted to apply the term "self-withdrawal." Gray, with a glowing mind, perceives and responds to the highest incentives of his subject; but, in expressing them, his aim is to abstract and mitigate—not to enforce and expand. His last word seems to be—"There is that within which passeth show." By grace of intellect, and a high refinement of scholarly and verbal polish, he indicates as much as he will trust himself to speak; beyond that, he clenches the door of his imagery and the penetralia of his thought. At the present day, when the *Bard* has become one of the commonplaces almost of juvenile literature, and is read and laid to heart even before the child becomes a schoolboy, it seems curious to be apprised (as for instance by Dr. Johnson, who continued in the main to adhere to this view) that, on its first appearance, it was regarded as wildly extravagant and crudely unintelligible—a fate which this ode shared with the *Progress of Poesy*, now less entirely familiar to all readers. And yet on reflection one can see that both of these poems are extremely bold in conception and treatment, and may well have startled the readers of that date, droned and drowsed with all sorts of comatose dead-alive verse that dubbed itself poetry. Ardent and adventurous in imagination, they are animated also in form and structure, although by this time we have become quite as sensitive to the restrictive as to the impassioned element in their composition. We should not forget to add that, in his love and study of Scandinavian and Cambrian

poetry, Gray, projecting himself back into the past, anticipated the feeling of more recent years than his own.

As to Gray's personal appearance little is recorded. He had a keen and rather cold face, with a sharp nose, and thin straight lips—the whole form of the mouth being small and unemotional. The observant and rather supercilious scholar, more than the meditating and sympathizing poet, was traceable in his countenance. His Letters were first published in a collected form in 1814: they are very well and carefully written, with academic playfulness and rather studied phrase, and bear record, among other things, of the attention he paid to French literature. Kindly feeling, an indolent turn, intellectual fastidiousness, are traceable up and down the course of the correspondence, and present a genuine likeness of the man.

POETS BORN BETWEEN GRAY AND GOLDSMITH.

William Collins.....	1720 to 1756.
Mark Akenside	1721 to 1770.
Christopher Smart	1722 to 1771.
William Mason	1725 to 1797.
John Newton	1725 to 1807.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

THACKERAY has termed Goldsmith "the most beloved of English writers." And indeed this is Goldsmith's great distinction among them all—and markedly among those of whom the present volume furnishes so slight and inadequate an account. He is the one upon whom is centred the greatest amount of affectionate indulgence, and from the widest public circle. The distinction is, in strictness, rather personal than literary; but it sufficiently bewrays the quality of his work, and that again is the record of his individual character. Burns alone, in our roll of names, might be pitted against Goldsmith as "most beloved"; and certainly, in his own Scottish division of the kingdom at least, he excites a far intenser feeling than the Irishman does in any division. That feeling, however, amounts, and with excellent reason, to enthusiasm: it is a passionate popular homage, a clinging of soul to the local god, and burning of incense to him in his high places. Such an acknowledgment of the national poet-hero entails, and could only co-exist along with, personal love, even in extreme and partizan form. It is a different thing from the hearty liking that attends upon Goldsmith from a more diffused and intermixed body of friends, the fellow-feeling that banters, blames, excuses, and merges all into that warmth which mantles from the warmest corner of the uncasuistic heart. Goldsmith, we are to recollect, was an Irishman: and it is no small testimony to the spontaneity and winningness of the Irish nature that on

a son of the Emerald Isle—one who, to cite his own expression, "never brought anything out of it except his brogue and his blunders"—has devolved this supreme prerogative of being "the most beloved of English writers."

The natal place of Oliver Goldsmith was the hamlet of Pallas, or Pallasmore, in the County of Longford, and the date of his birth the 10th of November 1728. He was the second son, and fifth child, in a family of eight. The race is understood to have come originally from Crayford in Kent; it had been settled for some generations in Ireland, and was of very creditable standing there. The great-great-grandfather, great-grandfather, and father, of Oliver, were all clergymen of the Protestant Establishment; unthriftiness and unworldliness passed from sire to son.[1] The father, the Reverend Charles Goldsmith, who obtains the credit of having furnished his son with many of the traits of character embodied in Dr. Primrose, the "Vicar of Wakefield," married very early, and without any money to spare—his whole annual incomings being at the time not more than £40.—

"And passing rich on forty pounds a year"

was thus a real family reminiscence for Oliver; and both his father, and in due time his brother Henry, the eldest and favourite son, managed to realize the spiritual as well as the material conditions recorded in that endlessly quoted verse. The country about Pallas is of uncommon loveliness; the birth-house of Oliver fell in the long-run into dilapidation, and was reputed to be haunted by fairies. By the death of his wife's

[1] It is amusing to find the harebrained character of the family repeated in the generation which succeeded Oliver Goldsmith. His nephew, Lieutenant Goldsmith, R.N., in 1824 resolved to try whether an ancient Cornish prophecy was true, that the famous Logan Stone would never be overturned by human strength: and, aided by a party of his seamen, he succeeded in rolling over this load of about seventy tons. The practical joke proved no joke to its perpetrator. He was ordered by the Admiralty to reinstate the Logan Stone in its proper site, and hence incurred debts which were only paid off shortly before his decease.

uncle, the Rectory of Kilkenny West came to the Reverend Charles Goldsmith, and he thereupon transferred himself to Lissoy, in County Westmeath, where he had a farm of seventy acres.

Ordinary village-schooling was the tuition which little Oliver first received: from a schoolmistress he passed at the age of six to an old campaigner named Thomas Byrne. Getting pitted with the small-pox, he left that school, and went to Mr. Griffin, a clerical schoolmaster at Elphin, County Roscommon, and lived for a while with his uncle, John Goldsmith Esquire of Ballyoughter: two other and superior schools ensued, at Athlone and Edgeworthtown. Fairies, robbers, and whatsoever bore an aspect of fancy, romance, and adventure, occupied the unscholastic brain and roving imagination of the boy. Before the age of eight he began versifying; and at nine he improvised a couplet which, not absolutely contemptible as verse, was certainly neat as repartee, and is said to have so far impressed his relatives as to incite them to the necessary efforts for giving Oliver a learned education. He was dancing a hornpipe at his uncle's house on a festive occasion, and his ungainly figure procured him from the violinist the nickname "my little Æsop"; to which he lost not a moment in retorting,—

> "Our herald hath proclaimed this saying,—
> See Æsop dancing, and his monkey playing."

Oliver's paternal uncle by marriage, the Reverend Thomas Contarine of Carrick-on-Shannon, was especially liberal in subscribing towards the required outlay for his training at school and college, and in many an instance afterwards up to the time of his death in 1756.

Indolent but quick-witted at school, impulsively generous, a leader in sports and pastimes, Oliver proceeded in June 1744 to Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar or poor scholar. The humiliations incident to his position pained him. The Reverend Theaker Wilder, his tutor, bullied him in the fruitless endeavour

to direct his mind towards mathematics and the exact sciences, which Goldsmith continued constantly to regard with aversion. The youth was convivial and careless; and, his father having died early in 1747, he found himself in such straits that he was glad to turn-to at writing street-ballads saleable at five shillings each. He was publicly admonished by the University for taking part in a town-fracas; and afterwards, on account of another disturbance, he absconded from College, but soon returned—remaining until, in February 1749, a good while after the ordinary term, he obtained his degree as B.A.

The choice of a profession was now before him. He was indisposed to enter the church, yet he made a beginning with his two-years' probation for that career, reading miscellaneously, and with a view perhaps more to amusement than to the study of divinity. The time came for his being examined by the Bishop of Elphin, and he was rejected—partly, it is averred, because he went up for examination habited in a pair of scarlet breeches. He then became tutor in the family of Mr. Flinn, a neighbouring gentleman: a quarrel at cards brought this appointment to a conclusion. On leaving he had £30 in his pocket, and resolved to see the world. Several weeks passed, and then he reappeared destitute at his mother's house, accounting for his plight by a tale (not perhaps rigidly true) of how he had planned to sail from Cork to America, and how the ship had started without him. His friends now wanted Oliver to take to the law: at Dublin, *en route* to London, he lost his money by gambling, and returned to the house of his uncle Contarine. One of the three learned professions yet remained: his relative Dean Goldsmith recommended him to try medicine, and in the autumn of 1752 he reached Edinburgh (then the only school of medicine in which a degree could be taken), and, with the general surroundings of a scattered and over-social life, commenced the study of what became, every now and then, his future calling. Two winters were spent

in Edinburgh, and Goldsmith next prepared to complete his medical training on the continent, and set off with a small fund of about £33. As usual, a blunder and an adventure ensued. He precipitately started in a ship bound for Bordeaux instead of Holland, but at Newcastle-on-Tyne he was detained on suspicion, some of his companions being tracked as Jacobites. He then made a fair start for Holland, and arrived at Leyden University, where he studied chemistry under Gaubius, and anatomy under Albinus. Here, or as some accounts say at Louvain, he took the degree of Bachelor of Physic: and there is reason to think that the "Dr. Goldsmith" of after days never really advanced beyond this degree to that of M.D., although it has been suggested that the Paduan University, which he reached not long afterwards, may have bestowed upon him this major honour of the faculty. The sojourn at Leyden lasted about a year; and was succeeded by a continental tour—or prolonged stroll it might rather be called—in which we may well admire the lightness of Goldsmith's spirit and his purse, and his mixed temper of scrambling and desultory yet zealous and persevering adventure. Full of resource in his own facile genius and good-nature, he needs not to be indebted to Fortune for any other. It is said that he left Leyden with only a flute, a guinea, and one spare shirt; picking up, as he went along, a subsistence among the country-people by playing the first, rapidly exhausting the second, and retaining (let us hope), amid no little squalor of environment, his predilection for the third. He reached Paris; met and admired Voltaire; and had the discernment requisite for foreseeing the impending decline of monarchy in France. He rambled into Germany and Switzerland: and from the latter country he sent off to his brother Henry the first sketch of his poem of *The Traveller*, not completed and published until many years afterwards. At Geneva he undertook a travelling tutorship: like most other definite employments, this proved unpleasant to him, and he and his pupil separated at Marseilles.

Hence Goldsmith continued his journey into France, Piedmont, and northern Italy. He held learned disputations in colleges and convents, earning by his argumentative prowess a dole of money, a meal, and a bed. Six months were spent in Padua. Here he heard of the death of his liberal uncle Contarine; and he returned from Padua to England across France, having recourse again to his flute for aid in making his way along. Not indeed that he knew anything of music scientifically, for it is said that he could not even read a note of it.

Goldsmith landed at Dover early in 1756. He had no occupation and no outlook. There is a story that one of his first attempts was to take to the stage in the county of Kent: but nothing is really known of his proceedings, except that he was in great straits, and had come to London before the close of February. He became an usher in a school; then an assistant to a chemist near Fish Street Hill; then, on a small scale, a practitioner of medicine in Bankside. The medical calling was recurred to on and off—more frequently off than on—up to 1765, and then finally thrown aside. He also got meagre employment from booksellers; acted as reader and press-corrector for the celebrated printer-novelist Samuel Richardson; and took charge of a good classical school at Peckham kept by Dr. Milner. By his introduction to literary labours, obscure though they were at present, he had now at length got launched on his proper career, and only time and patience were needed to give him his rights in the world of writers and readers. In April 1757 he became a contributor to a serial of Whig politics, the *Monthly Review*, at a fair fixed salary, with board and lodging in addition: Mr. Griffiths of Paternoster Row was the proprietor. But this position also had to be resigned in about half a year; Griffiths resented a goodnatured indiscretion which Goldsmith had committed in pawning, to release his landlord from arrest, a coat which the publisher had supplied to him on credit, and the feud between the two was never entirely

appeased. Various literary jobs ensued, alternating with a resumption of the medical profession: he frequented the Temple Exchange Coffeehouse near Temple Bar, mixing there with various writers and others of established position, and in a letter of this period he speaks of his having "a very little reputation as a poet"—founded, we are entitled to assume, upon performances of corresponding tenuity. Bent upon realizing the means requisite for obtaining a medical appointment in India, Goldsmith now began his first substantial and considerable work, *An Enquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe:* he was in fact designated for the situation in question, that of Physician and Surgeon to a Factory at Coromandel, but finally some one else secured the post. In December 1758 another disappointment befell Goldsmith: he underwent an examination in surgery for the berth of Hospital Mate, and failed.

We must now take a glance at the period of literary activity which was opening for Goldsmith towards the date when he completed his thirtieth year. First we hear of a *Life of Voltaire*, written for a modicum of £20. Then, in March 1759, his *Enquiry into the State of Polite Learning* was published, without any author's name on the title-page; it sold to considerable advantage. He wrote for various magazines; and was especially successful with his *Chinese Letters*, afterwards modified into the form of the *Citizen of the World*—they appeared originally in the *Public Ledger*, a paper started in 1760. Then ensued a *Life of Beau Nash;* and in 1762, in two volumes, *A History of England, in a Series of Letters from a Nobleman to his Son*, published anonymously, and compiled chiefly from Hume, Rapin, Carte, and Kennet. The *Vicar of Wakefield* was completed in or about 1764, but not published until March 1766, when it obtained a first instalment of the conspicuous and universal popularity which has never failed till now. The circumstances of its sale form one of the

known among the many famous anecdotes of Goldsmith. He had been placed under arrest by his landlady for rent owing, and sent round to his cordial friend Dr. Johnson (they had now been acquainted for about four years), and, on the arrival of the latter, showed him the MS. of the novel, and asked whether it could not be turned into money: Johnson glanced over and approved it, and, issuing forth, sold it on the spot to Francis Newbery the publisher for an opportune subsidy of £63. While the *Vicar* remained as yet unprinted in Newbery's hands, Goldsmith flashed forth upon the town as a poet—*The Traveller* being published on the 19th of December 1764, and being the first production to which the author put his name. He had hitherto done no poetry of any importance: an oratorio of *The Captivity* (of the Jews in Babylon) is mentioned, but little of it is now traceable. *The Traveller* was lying by Goldsmith unfinished at the time when Johnson first saw the *Vicar of Wakefield*: he looked over the poem likewise, formed a high opinion of it, and even set upon it the sign-manual of his approbation by adding nine verses towards the conclusion. The success of the *Traveller* was signal and instantaneous: several editions appeared within the course of a year, and Goldsmith was pronounced by many—or he divided this distinction with Gray—the first poet of his time. In a pecuniary sense however the venture was of little importance to our author; for Newbery, out of the large sums which he netted, only handed over £21 to him. The ballad of *The Hermit* (originally named *Edwin and Angelina*) followed soon afterwards: and in 1765 were collected from various sources and published the *Essays by Goldsmith*, which sold well and were translated into French, writer's remuneration being again a sum of £21. The still ar nursery-tale of *Goody Two-Shoes* appeared in the same nd is by many ascribed to Goldsmith's hand: it was cer- t such decided hackwork as some that he still continued the booksellers. One of these, Mr. Davies, proposed

to him to compile a popular *History of Rome:* it was published in 1769, and had an extensive sale. For this no less a sum than £262. 10s. was paid. Goldsmith remained as ever impecunious and harrassed, but he had the spirit to refuse an advantageous offer for writing pamphlets in the interest of the ministry. In the summer of 1768, when his beloved elder brother Henry died in Ireland, a curate and schoolmaster of consistently high aims and principles, to which his narrow fortunes lent a dim but pathetic lustre, Oliver—then staying out of town in Edgeware Road—was writing the *Deserted Village*, in which combined reminiscences of his brother and father appear with so much of engaging yet refined and well-weighed simplicity. Auburn, the "village" of the poem, is understood to represent substantially Lissoy: General Napier, the owner of the mansion named Littleton, and of much property in the neighbourhood, had turned all the tenants out of their farms, in order that he might enclose them in his own private demesne. At a more recent date the residence of Captain Hogan, about three miles distant from Ballymahon, and the village adjoining, have been distinguished by the now classical name of Auburn. This celebrated poem was published on the 5th of May 1770, and had an immense sale: by August a fifth edition had already come out. The price offered to Goldsmith was £105: he however thought it too much, and—rare instance of practice responsive to theory—he actually returned the money to the publisher, but was soon, through the continued demand for the poem, repaid in full. In 1769 he began the *History of Animated Nature*, the engagement being for eight volumes at £105 each; this is chiefly concocted from Buffon, and was published in 1774. A *Life of Parnell* the Poet, and a *Life of Lord Bolingbroke*, were produced in 1770; and in the following year the well-known *History of England*, in four volumes, made up, as the preface acknowledges, mostly from Rapin, Carte, Hume, and Smollett, and of as little serious value, from a strictly

historical point of view, as the other performances by our author in the same class of literature. The earlier *History of England in Letters* was partly laid under contribution likewise. Goldsmith was charged with being unfriendly in this work to liberty and the rights of the subject: to which censure he did not scruple to reply in a letter, with a candour which is amusing and may almost deserve to be called admirable, that he "had no thought for or against liberty in his head," but had simply executed a spell of taskwork. The last poem by Goldsmith to which I need refer here is the little snatch of humorous character-painting named *Retaliation*, never completed: it was provoked by an epigram of Garrick's upon our author, and Garrick in his turn retorted with another wherein Goldsmith is styled

"This scholar, rake, christian, dupe, gamester, and poet."

A project which never came to anything was that of a *Dictionary of Arts and Sciences*, in which Johnson and others were to lend their aid. This was not encouraged by the booksellers; so Goldsmith thought, but here again without any result, of converting the materials he had collected into a *Survey of Experimental Philosophy*.

In this slight summary of his numerous and multifarious writings, I have as yet made no mention of the two comedies—the *Goodnatured Man*, and *She Stoops to Conquer*. The former was begun in 1766, when Goldsmith was enjoying the full flush of his celebrity from the *Traveller*, and it was finished early in 1767. It came out in the following year at Covent Garden Theatre, and, though not particularly successful, ran for ten nights, and brought-in to its author about £400 from the theatre, and £100 from the publisher as well. *She Stoops to Conquer* was first performed in May 1773, and was received with the greatest applause—far greater indeed than had at all been looked for. Large profits accrued from it, but to Gold-

smith himself comparatively little. An insolent letter published in the *London Packet* regarding this play led the peppery and irreflective playwright to commit an assault upon Mr. Evans, the publisher of the journal, whose Welsh blood was not much more wont to bear and forbear than the Irish blood of Goldsmith. Both combatants issued mauled from the encounter; and the aggressor had to patch up a truce by contributing £50 to the funds of the Welsh Charity.

Many and amusing are the anecdotes of Goldsmith—the friend, and not unfrequently the butt, of Hogarth, Johnson, Burke (who had been a fellow-student with him in Dublin University), Boswell, Reynolds, Bishop Percy, Garrick, Richard Nugent Lord Clare, the Horneck family, and so many others with whom to associate was to shine at once with proper and with reflected light—the patron and the prey of all sorts of Irish waifs and strays floating on the surges of London life, hungry and rollicking, embarrassing and importunate — the boon-companion of queer fellows and company out-at-elbows —the man of tolerant sympathy for all men and all women in need of a helping hand, his purse always open if frequently empty, his heart ever warm if seldom discreet. But for mere anecdotes I have no adequate space here: and indeed some of my readers may share with myself a certain sense of relief in not going-over once again, and for the five-hundredth time, all the details of how Goldsmith ordered a bloom-coloured coat of his tailor, the long-suffering and partially-paid Filby, and how he treated three damsels to an elegant tea at the White Conduit House, and couldn't discharge the bill. Instead of my spoiling in the retailing anecdotes of this sort which have been well no less than repeatedly told aforetime, it may perhaps be pleasant to the London reader to see a list of the localities in which Goldsmith was housed in the capital. Up to the middle of 1760 he was in Green-Arbour Court; and he removed successively to decent apartments in Wine-Office Court, Fleet

Street; to Islington, then a suburban village; to chambers in the Temple; and finally to a better set of chambers at No. 2 Brick Court, Middle Temple. The Horneck family, whom I have just been mentioning, were among the most cherished friends of the poet's later years, and probably gave him more liking for "good society" (in the current meaning of that term) than he was apt to acquire otherwise. The beautiful Miss Mary Horneck, who got the nickname of "the Jessamy Bride," and whose life was prolonged till 1840, was more particularly partial to Goldsmith, and he regarded her with a freshness and warmth of predilection that partook apparently almost of a lover's ardour. He became in 1764 one of the nine original members of the Literary Club, along with Johnson, Reynolds, Burke, Bennet Langton, Topham Beauclerc, Chamier, Hawkins, and Dr. Nugent; and in 1769 was appointed to the honorary post of Professor of Ancient History to the Royal Academy. Five of these eight associates have long ago vanished from the memory of ordinary men, and survive only in the minds of literary enquirers, and haunters of the byeways of society and gossip in those days; it is proportionately amusing to learn that Goldsmith, the author of the *Vicar of Wakefield*, and "most beloved of English writers," was regarded as hardly fit company for these worthies, the predestined "alms for oblivion." The three who were really fit company for *him*—Johnson, Reynolds, and Burke—knew better.

This leads us to say the few necessary words regarding Goldsmith's person, demeanour, and character. He was thick and short, about 5 feet 5 inches, and, according to Miss Reynolds when first she knew him, not unlike a journeyman tailor in externals; somewhat awkward in refined society; with a hesitating unattractive manner of speaking, and a loud laugh; his complexion fair, his hair brown—so far as this was distinguishable, for he always wore a wig, though Reynolds's famous portrait might suggest the contrary. Garrick, as we have seen,

taxed him with raking and gaming; and there seems no particular reason for disbelieving this statement and others to the like effect, although some biographers, indulgent to one who was the very soul of indulgence to his fellows, seek to reduce these charges to an insignificant core of fact. That he had a large share of childish vanity is not to be denied—an uneasy itch for putting himself forward, and for affecting a facile elegance of dress and address for which he had the slenderest natural qualifications. This was however strictly *childish* vanity, and remained throughout his life—such are the inconsistencies of human character—combined with essential modesty, simplicity, and self-distrust. Poor at first, and afterwards, though his profits were far from trivial, harrassed with debt—a load which seems to have increased upon him more especially from the year 1768, when his first comedy was acted—he owed some £2000 at his death: Johnson, who yielded to none in the staunchness and heartiness of his affection for Goldsmith, remarked in his sententious way that "he had raised money and squandered it by every artifice of acquisition and folly of expense." His religious views appear to have been indefinite: some writers go so far as to say that he had no particular creed. In the Holy Week of 1773 Boswell took it upon himself to sermonize the poet, and he received for reply: "Sir, as I take my shoes from the shoemaker, and my coat from the tailor, so I take my religion from the priest." Johnson's comment, when he heard of this, was—"Sir, Goldsmith knows nothing—he has made up his mind about nothing." And we may be content to think that the lexicographer, himself so zealous a believer, spoke advisedly and on sufficient grounds.

In the autumn of 1772 Goldsmith returned from Edgeware to London, with many debts and broken health. Early in March 1774 he went to country-quarters at Hyde, intending to live chiefly out of town henceforward: but this was not to be. He had to come back to his chambers in the Temple, troubled

by an access of "a local complaint" (as a biographer terms it) from which he had suffered for some time past. This subsided, but was succeeded by low nervous fever. He took to his bed on the 25th of March, languished there some days, and, in reply to a question from his physician, said that his mind was ill at ease—the last words which he spoke: convulsions came on, and on the 4th of April, at the comparatively early age of forty-five, he was no more. He doctored himself to some extent, and an overdose of a very powerful medicine is reputed to have had something to do with the fatal termination. On the 9th he was interred in the burial-ground of the Temple Church. A monument by Nollekens was erected to him in Westminster Abbey, bearing that inscription by Johnson of which the most emphatic phrase remains engraved on the minds of successive generations of his countrymen, no less than on the perishing marble—"*Nullum fere scribendi genus non tetigit, nullum quod tetigit non ornavit.*

Of all the classes of writing which Goldsmith thus embellished, the only one which I need here deal with is the poetic; and we find amid the small bulk of his poetry that the only two compositions of any considerable importance are *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*,—most of the residue have a playful turn. Goldsmith is remarkable among our poets for having little which can be expressly fixed upon as poetry—although there is undoubtedly an abundance of felicitous diction, and glowing appositeness of thought. Good feeling, right sense, genuine observation, descriptive and expressive language, flowing, harmonious, and accomplished verse—all these are present, and avail to make the work soundly poetical, if not poetry in its ultimate essence. The genial and tender nature of the man forms the great, the paramount charm of the verse. Goldsmith did not care for elaborate art, or rules of art. In the dedication of *The Traveller*, addressed to his brother Henry, he says that Poetry suffers "from the mistaken efforts

of the learned to improve it. What criticisms have we not heard of late in favour of blank verse and Pindaric odes, choruses, anapæsts, and iambics, alliterative care and happy negligence! Every absurdity has now a champion to defend it; and, as he is generally much in the wrong, so he has always much to say, for Error is ever talkative." Goldsmith's poems are in fact matter fit for either poetry or prose, and manner which would be almost as fit for prose as for poetry, were it not for the simple consideration that they are written in excellent verse, with such elevation and refinement of method, and such turns of phrase, as verse naturally and properly entails.

POETS BORN BETWEEN GOLDSMITH AND COWPER.

Bishop Thomas Percy	1728 to 1811.
Charles Churchill	1731 to 1764.
Erasmus Darwin	1731 to 1802.
William Falconer	1731 to 1769.
James Beattie	1735 to 1803.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THE family to which the poet Cowper belonged was that which rose to the highest legal eminence in the person of Lord Chancellor Cowper. His lordship's nephew, the Rev. John Cowper, D.D., was rector of Great Berkhamstead, Hertfordshire; at which place William, the future poet, was born on the 26th of November 1731. In 1737 he lost the tender mother (Anne Donne, of Ludham Hall, Norfolk) to whom some of his own tenderest verses are devoted. The boy first went to school at the age of six; and remained there two years: he was made miserable by the cruelties of an elder lad. Hence he was removed to the house of an oculist for another couple of years, as fears were entertained for his sight. At the age of ten he became a pupil in Westminster School, and stayed there till his nineteenth year: he was diligent in his studies, and entered into boyish sports with spirit.

The career of law having been chosen for him, principally in consideration of the legal patronage which lay in the family, he was articled, on leaving Westminster School, to a solicitor for three years: one of his fellow-clerks in this situation was the youth who rose to be Lord Thurlow. Cowper learned but little law; removed to chambers in the Middle Temple; and in 1754 was called to the bar. He fell into an extraordinary state of dejection soon after entering the Temple, having in fact a congenital tendency to insanity. This disorder lasted nearly a year, but received some degree of alleviation from the

reading of the religious poems of George Herbert. In 1759 he was appointed a Commissioner of Bankrupts. Still, however, he remained a negligent lawyer,—indifferent, or more than indifferent, to his profession. This temper of mind was encouraged by the fact of his having a small patrimony, upon which he partly relied for a subsistence.

Cowper continued living in the Temple for eleven years, up to 1763, by which time his private resources were nearly exhausted. According to his own subsequent account, his life in this quarter was an "uninterrupted course of sinful indulgence": it appears that he joined in the ordinary drinking habits of the day, and probably enough in other youthful dissipations, but this latter point is not distinctly set forth. Within this period he courted his cousin Theodora Cowper, sister of Lady Hesketh; but without any practical result save disappointment to himself, a marriage between the young people being objected to on prudential grounds. He also dallied with literature, contributing a few papers to a journal named *The Connoisseur*.

Early in 1763 occurred the event which determined, in a way wholly different from what it appeared to promise, the entire future career of Cowper. The appointment, which he now received from his cousin, to the honourable and lucrative post of First Clerk (or Reading Clerk, and Clerk of the Committees) to the House of Lords, would have seemed to be a possible turning-point in his fortunes, by way of a definite and commodious settlement in life: it proved to be a turning-point of a very different kind—the occasion of madness, religion, poetry, and literary fame. Cowper was a young man of extreme and painful nervousness — nervousness which reached the morbid stage, and was but too capable of passing beyond that into the insane stage. His new duties required him to be often in personal attendance before the House of Lords. Any such sort of publicity was, as he has phrased it, "mortal poison" to himself: hence he voluntarily solicited almost

immediately, and obtained, a transfer from the First Clerkship to a somewhat inferior position, that of Clerk of the Journals, to which the same objection did not apply. But here lay another pitfall for his timorous and wavering steps. The political combinations of the time made it convenient for the Lords to suspect that Cowper's cousin, in appointing him to this lower situation, and transferring the then occupant of it to the higher, must have entered into some corrupt bargain. The consequence was that Cowper was summoned to submit himself to an examination at the bar of their Lordships' house before commencing his functions, so as to prove his competence. For this purpose he studied the work of the Journals for about half a year, with little success, and less assistance from his destined subordinates. In October 1763 the terrible moment was impending. He could not make up his mind to resign, for that would be construed into a confession damaging to his relative's honour: so he would actually have to appear at the bar of the house, be examined, be badgered, probably break down and fail. What refuge but insanity? Cowper longed for insanity, but it would not come: he at least supposed that it would not and did not come,—but we, judging the facts by the light of after events, and indeed on their own showing, need scarcely hesitate to say that so monstrous a longing, founded on so trumpery a cause, was itself the longing of a lunatic. Failing insanity, what refuge but suicide? Laudanum first, and next drowning commended themselves to the judicial intellect of the future poet of *Stanzas Subjoined to the Bills of Mortality:* but even this was denied him—the hand of Providence immediately, and in fact miraculously, held him back. A penknife was but a *pis aller:* that proved equally ineffectual when matched against the present deity. "One way remains," as Shelley has said of a graver theologic complexity. Cowper, who could not succeed in self-poisoning, drowning, or stabbing, did succeed in hanging himself.

A garter was the sufficient means; but still the end failed,—he fell down after losing his consciousness. He now informed his kinsman of these attempts, and received the obvious reply that he could not, under the circumstances, take up the appointment which had been conferred upon him. On the very day fixed for his examination—*dies illa*—he resigned.

The poet (as he has left it on record) did not remember having felt any serious religious impressions earlier than this his thirty-second year—save one or two that proved altogether transitory. His time was now come. He felt a terrible conviction of sin, and despair of salvation: he thought that he had, long before at Southampton, committed "the unpardonable sin," by not ascribing to direct divine illumination a very sudden and strong sensation of happiness which he had then experienced. At last, early in December 1763, he became clearly and undeniably mad, immediately after feeling as if a mighty blow had struck his brain; mad to the eyes of those about him, and mad too to his own after-knowledge. We need not, however, date Cowper's insanity so late as December, nor be very confident that it was over for the time (for it undoubtedly returned afterwards) by the middle of July 1764, which is the date specified by himself. The man who could make up his mind to drink laudanum out of a basin, solely in order to escape an examination before the House of Lords preliminary to occupying a snug berth, may be pronounced mad at that moment as safely as at the time, shortly ensuing, when he supposed he had committed the unpardonable sin by not assuming himself to be God-inspired when he was happy, or at that other time when he had a sensation of a blow on his brain. And the man who could in after years, and believing himself entirely rational, write of his attempt with the laudanum, "With the most confirmed resolution I reached forth my hand towards the basin, when the fingers of both hands were so closely contracted as if bound with a cord, and became entirely

useless,—it had the air of a divine interposition"—was still in a state of mind that one would hardly call sane. In fact, it appears to me more than questionable whether Cowper was strictly sound-minded in any stage of his exceptional religious experiences. If he was insane when he believed himself to be secure of damnation, intermediately between the attempted suicide and the acknowledged raving madness, I do not see why we should suppose that he was perfectly sane when the religious exaltation took another turn, and he regarded himself as converted, and a monument of the invisible miracle of grace. In his autobiographical narrative he treats himself as sane at *all* these dates, although insane for some months betwixt his first conviction of damnation and his conviction of salvation; and in the same narrative he relates, as real facts of divine interposition against his suicidal attempts, various details which were seemingly no more than his own hallucinations of the time, or deranged reminiscences in after years. There are clearly the strongest grounds, from the evidence of dates and otherwise, for saying that the conviction of damnation was a form of religious mania; and I know of no very good reason why the conviction of salvation should have been an inspiration of unclouded intellect. The most clearly perceptible difference between the two cases is that the conviction of damnation naturally made Cowper extremely unhappy, and culminated in ravings; while the conviction of salvation made him happy, and culminated in placidity and in hymn-writing. Whether the latter conviction was any more *rational* than the former is quite a separate question.

At the present moment we have to deal with Cowper confessedly and violently mad. He was placed under the care of Dr. Cotton at St. Alban's; and remained there under careful tending many months, constantly oppressed at first with the sense of everlasting reprobation. One day in July 1764 he opened a Bible at the third chapter of the Epistle to the Romans—

"Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." Cowper read the words, was relieved from his load of anguish, and was from that day a converted man. Still, it was not considered expedient to discharge him as yet from the asylum—and this fact again is a weighty suggestion that his religious felicity was as much a form of mania as his religious despair: he remained under Dr. Cotton's superintendence for nearly a year ensuing. In June 1765 he did at last quit the asylum. He resigned, chiefly in order to avoid resuming a London life, his position as Commissioner of Bankrupts, which brought him only the small income of about £60 per annum: his means thus became extremely straitened. He took up his residence at Huntingdon, with a view to being near a younger brother, then at Cambridge.

At Huntingdon he formed the friendship which constituted the tranquil happiness of the great majority of his remaining life: he became acquainted with the Rev. Mr. Unwin and his family. These kindly and sympathizing neighbours, observing his depressed spirits and scanty means, readily sanctioned an arrangement whereby Cowper became a boarder and inmate in their house: he entered the hospitable doors on the 11th of November 1765, and seldom had any other home thenceforward than with the Unwin family. Mr. Unwin himself was soon lost from the circle, dying in 1767. Cowper and Mrs. Unwin—the "Mary" of his poems—then removed to Olney in Buckinghamshire, being attracted thither by their special esteem for the curate, Mr. Newton, the well-known evangelical clergyman. Here Cowper zealously identified himself with the religious interests of the society around him; his charities of mind and heart expanded; and he became, as far as the interruptions of his constitutional malady allowed, a happy man. Mr. Newton

obtained his coöperation on the volume of Hymns he was then preparing, so well-known as the *Olney Hymns*, published in 1776. A fair proportion of the whole number are by Cowper, who thus, at the more than mature age of forty-four or forty-five, first took an appreciable position in the field of literature and of poetry. This daylight of his manhood was not without its clouds. Attacks of mania recurred between 1773 and 1776, consequent partly upon the death of his brother; and they put a stop to the writing of his hymns before he had gone to any great length with the work. At another time he connected himself with the fantastic religionist Teedon; a vagary in which again the taint of insanity is to be surmised.

In this same year, 1776, and after Cowper's recovery, Mr. Newton quitted Olney: one of the mainstays of the poet's activity and cheerfulness was thus removed. At Mrs. Unwin's solicitation he now began his poem on *The Progress of Error;* followed by three others—*Truth, Table-talk,* and *Expostulation.* These, along with *Hope, Charity, Conversation, Retirement,* and some short pieces, were published in one volume in 1782, without exciting particular notice. Though no longer a young man, he entered with youthful ardour and impulse on the poetic career; for it is said that the contents of this volume, about 6000 lines of verse, were the production of a quarter of a year. It was followed in 1785 by *The Task* and *Tirocinium;* and now at last, at the age of fifty-three, Cowper became a man of renown. The book was greatly admired, and raised him, in public estimation, to a level with any contemporary writer of poetry. The lady who (as intimated at the opening of *The Task*) pressed Cowper to undertake the writing of that work, was Lady Austen, a clever and lively widow whose society at this period possessed great attractions for him: gradually, however, her hold upon him weakened—whether through a change in his own feelings, or, as has sometimes been said, through the influence of Mrs. Unwin, who apprehended that Lady Austen

might be preferred even to herself. When eventually the latter quitted Olney, the Throgmorton family replaced her to some extent in Cowper's regard. The sprightly widow was the suggestor also of *John Gilpin*—which endlessly popular effusion, the delight of succeeding generations of the juvenile, and not of the juvenile only, was first published anonymously, in 1783, in a collection named *The Repository*. Thus Lady Austen is entitled to a considerable royalty on the gratitude which all are so ready to pay to Cowper for his poetic performances. In 1784 he began—partly in the hope of banishing his hypochondriacal distresses—the formidable work of translating Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into blank verse. This occupied him during six years. The book was at last published in 1791, and afterwards, in deference to the views of some of his critics, remodelled to a considerable extent in respect of poetic manner and diction, and reissued in its revised form. We all know that Cowper was (as he resolved to be, both in letter and in spirit) a much more *faithful* translator of Homer than Pope, who, in his successor's opinion, had had no real relish for the Grecian poet—whatever may be the ultimate balance of merit on a comparison of the two works. His version therefore deserved a very respectful reception, and holds its own to this day against the many subsequent adventures which have been made in the same field—some of them not much unlike Cowper's own in range of attempt, others markedly dissimilar. In the way of original work, the only other leading performance by Cowper which remains to be mentioned is the *Anti-Thelyphthora*, written to confute the opponents of marriage: this was not published till after his death.

While his translation of Homer was in progress, the poet removed from Olney to the neighbouring village of Weston, at the recommendation of his cousin Lady Hesketh, with whom he had recently renewed a long-suspended correspondence, and who actively co-operated with Mrs. Unwin in comforting his

later years. Hardly was the Homer completed when he undertook to superintend a new edition of Milton's works; this included the translating of his Latin and Italian poems. In 1792 a great affliction befell him: Mrs. Unwin was affected by a paralytic seizure, and the mournful wane of her faculties bespoke but too surely the approaches of death. Her end was delayed, however, for some while, and did not ensue till the 17th of December 1796. When this occurred, Cowper was himself already worse than dead—he was finally and without recovery insane.

His mental malady had re-appeared for about six months in 1787: in 1794 it again set in—not unconnected probably with his dejection on Mrs. Unwin's account. In the same year his services to poetical and religious literature were recognized by a pension of £300 per annum. He was now living with Lady Hesketh, and a young relative named Johnson paid much attention to the sufferer. He was removed, for change of scene, to North Tuddenham in Norfolk; then to Mundsley; then to East Dereham, in the same county. Absolute darkness did not as yet close-in upon him: there were intervals of lumour, in which he composed some small pieces, and attended to the revision of his Homer. The end was gloomy: religious despair was busy in tormenting his mind, and dropsy his body. He died on the 25th of April 1800.

The eager, sudden-looking, large-eyed, shaven face of Cowper is familiar to us in his portraits—a face sharp-cut and sufficiently well-moulded, without being handsome, nor particularly sympathetic. It is a high-strung, excitable face; as of a man too susceptible and touchy to put himself forward willingly among his fellows, but who, feeling a "vocation" upon him, would be more than merely earnest—self-asserting, aggressive, and unyielding. This is in fact very much the character of his writings. He was an enthusiastic lover of Nature, and full of gentle kindliness, and of quiet pleasant good-humour,—and

all these loveable qualities appear in ample proportion and measure in passages of his writings: but at the same time his narrow, exclusive, severe, and arbitrary religious creed—a creed which made him as sure that other people were wicked and marked out for damnation as that himself was elected and saved (and even as regards himself this confidence gave way sometimes to utter desperation)—this creed speaks out in his poems in unmistakeable tones of harsh judgment and unqualified denunciation. Few writers are more steadily unsparing of the lash than the shrinkingly sensitive Cowper. It may be that he does not lay it on with the sense of personal power, and indignant paying-off of old scores, which one finds in a Juvenal or a Pope; but the conviction that he is the mouthpiece of Providence, and that, when William Cowper has pronounced a man reprobate, the smoke of his burning is certain to ascend up for ever and ever, stands in stead of much, and lends unction to the hallowed strain. In conformity with this inspiration, his writing is nervous and terse, well stored with vigorous stinging single lines; and his power of expressive characterization, whether in moral declaiming or in descriptive work, is very considerable—and was (at any rate in the latter class of passages) even more noticeable in his own day than it is in ours. Apart from his religion, Cowper (as has just been said) was eminently humane and gentle-hearted; the interest which he took in his tame hares will perhaps be remembered when much of his wielding of the divine thunderbolts against the profane shall have been forgotten. It was in 1774, during one of his periods of great mental depression, that the first of his leverets was presented to him, in the hope of diverting his mind from more moody thoughts: two others followed afterwards; and the diverse characters and manners of the three formed an engaging study to him for years. Puss, the latest to survive, expired in March 1786.

In point of literary or poetic style, Cowper was mainly in-

dependent, and the pioneer of a simpler and more natural method than he found prevailing: his didactic or censorial poems may be regarded as formed on the writings of Churchill rather than of any other predecessor. Besides his merits as a poet, his excellences as a letter-writer have deserved and received very high praise. His correspondence is unaffected, facile, and often playful. Religion of course forms a substantial part of this, as it so conspicuously did of the author's mind: but it has been noticed, and has been made matter of some reproach from certain quarters, that the religious tone of the letters diminishes very observably after 1785, when Cowper had become an eminent man in literature, and more open consequently to the entanglements of "the world."

POETS BORN BETWEEN COWPER AND BURNS.

James Macpherson	1738 to 1796.
John Wolcot	1738 to 1819.
Anna Letitia Barbauld	1743 to 1825.
Charles Dibdin	1745 to 1814.
Anna Seward	1747 to 1809.
John Logan	1748 to 1788.
Robert Fergusson	1751 to 1774.
Richard Brinsley Sheridan	1751 to 1816.
Thomas Chatterton	1752 to 1770.
George Crabbe	1754 to 1832.
Robert Bloomfield	1756 to 1823.
William Blake	1757 to 1827.

ROBERT BURNS.

THE name of Robert Burns is a well-understood signal for an overflow of all sorts of commonplaces from the right-minded critic. These commonplaces run mainly in three channels:—ecstatic astonishment at finding that a ploughman was also a poet; wringing of hands over the admission that the ploughman and poet was likewise a drunkard, and a somewhat miscellaneous lover; and caustic severity upon the lionizers and "admirers of native genius" who could find no employment more appropriate than that of excise-officer for the brightest and finest mind of their country and generation. All these commonplaces must stand confessed as warranted by the facts: they are truths, but they are also truisms. We have heard them very often, and have always sat in meek acquiescence and unfeigned concurrence. But the time comes when they have been repeated frequently enough to make the enlarging upon them a weariness, and the profuse and argumentative re-enforcement of them a superfluity. The reader of the following few observations will, I dare say, consent to understand once for all that Burns really was a ploughman—his own plough-driver on his father's or his own small farm; and became in due course of time a great poet, and in undue course a toper; and was fit for much loftier occupation than the gauging of ale-barrels and seizing of illicit stills. The reader and I may start from these facts as rather elementary data; and he will perhaps not resent my stating them in such reasonable brevity as consists with my

plan, and without much "improving" of the occasion. There are plenty of other books concerning Burns where powerful fountain-heads of morality, and of ardent but deprecatory enthusiasm, are kept continually on tap.

Robert Burness (or Burnes)—for such was his inherited patronymic, though in after years he thought fit to condense it into Burns—was born on the 25th of January [1] 1759, at a small cottage in the parish of Alloway, about two miles south-west of the town of Ayr. His father, William Burness, was son of a farmer in Kincardineshire. Owing to the poverty of his family, he had in youth come south, and had served as a gardener in various families. In December 1757 he had married Agnes Brown, who survived by many years her illustrious son: she died in 1820. The father, a man of superior understanding, and of the strong, upright, self-respecting character so honourably distinctive of the better Scotch peasantry, took, when he married, a perpetual lease of seven acres of land, which he cultivated as a nurseryman: here he personally built his own cottage. Robert was the eldest son of the union. His father had a dire struggle to maintain for a decent subsistence, and to educate his family. Robert was sent to a neighbouring school in the sixth year of his age, and soon showed some bookish likings: afterwards he received a little instruction at home, partly from his father. He managed to pick up a smattering of French (which he was not averse from airing in after years), and had a quarter of a year's practice in land-surveying, which has been dignified with the name of "practical mathematics." The whole amount of his tutoring, however, was inconsiderable. He read with interest and attention, as the scanty chance offered, the works of some poets—Pope and Ramsay, for instance—the *Spectator*, and a volume of Letters by good writers.

[1] Some authorities say the 29th; but the earlier day is the correct one.

Toil and moil was the early life of Burns—hard labour, and, what is worse, anxious labour: the wolf was always at the door. A depression of spirits took possession of him, spite of a very ample share of youthful mirth and buoyancy, and darkened many hours of his later life. The family was very economical, and Burns, being as yet both thrifty and strictly temperate, in no way derogated from this creditable standard: there was no hired servant, and for years no butcher's meat in the house. Some time before the father's death, which occurred in February 1784, Robert and his brother Gilbert took another farm, stocked from the hard-wrung savings of the household: the labour of the brothers was remunerated at the rate of £7 per annum each, and this plan continued for about four years. At another time Robert, loth to drudge on for ever as a mere labourer, tried a flax-dressing scheme in partnership at Irvine; but this soon proved abortive. When the father died, there remained, along with his widow, five children younger than Robert and Gilbert: the failure of a lawsuit with his landlord was just bringing a crash of ruin upon honest hardworking William Burness, when death stepped in, and for him trouble was no more.

Robert was now full twenty-five years of age, and a man of great local popularity, and some note. He had shown an early susceptibility to the amorous passion. His first love, worth so calling, was at the age of fourteen: love summoned poetry to its aid, and he became a versifier. He was besides a fluent and vigorous talker; and his gifts were too bright and attractive to allow of his remaining long unknown in his own neighbourhood. Furiously loving the women, and loved by them in return (though it would appear that of real *de facto* amours he had no experience until his twenty-third year), received with acclaim wherever the men wanted to be lively, he took his fill of facile and unsettling pleasures. His habits became convivial, and all the more so after he had joined a society of Freemasons.

Still, he seems for a while to have exercised a tolerable amount of self-control as far as drinking is concerned. His brother, indeed, has left it on record that he did not remember in Robert any instance of positive intoxication until at a late date of his poetical career; and some other authorities will have it that, up to within the last few years of his life, when he had removed to Dumfries, he preserved a fair character for sobriety. His poetizing for some years made no very noticeable progression: its more important developments are to be dated from about his twenty-fourth year.

Diffusive love-making has its mischances. One day Burns found himself the prospective father of a brace of twins by his sweetheart Jean Armour, the daughter of a respectable master-mason. Roused to a lively sense of his responsibilities, he agreed with Jean that they should make a legal profession of antecedent marriage, thus legitimizing the offspring; and that he himself should then go off to Jamaica to try his fortune in the character of assistant overseer to a planter, seeing that nothing but penury appeared to be his destined lot in Scotland. He paid nine guineas for a steerage-passage; and was indeed in a fever to be off, as he had been called upon to give security for the maintenance of his offspring, and was in dread of imprisonment. He wrote a farewell poem to Ayrshire and to Scotland—"The gloomy night is gathering fast." However, the tardy compensation which he was hoping to make to Jean for the imprudence and trouble into which he had betrayed her was not at present allowed to take effect. Her parents were so indignant at the affair that they absolutely refused to hear of matrimony; and Jean consented to relinquish her lover's written declaration of marriage, and himself along with it. Burns meanwhile, regarding her as having flinched in love and faith before adverse circumstances, denounced and abjured her, and indemnified himself by making love to Mary Campbell, his "Highland Mary." The poet and his Mary plighted their

troth with much fervour: but this episode in the history of his loves came to nothing, the damsel having very soon afterwards died of a fever at Greenock.

With everything prepared for his start to Jamaica, and expecting to remain away from Scotland for years, if not for the remainder of his life, the consciousness of his poetic gift worked upon the mind of Burns: he resolved to leave behind him some record that the fields and streams, the lasses and humours, of Ayrshire, had been all-sufficient and immortal inspiration to a quenchless genius. Encouraged by his landlord, Mr. Gavin Hamilton, he determined to publish a small volume of his verses. This came out accordingly in the autumn of 1786. The edition, printed at Kilmarnock, was of 600 copies, of which about 350 were subscribed for: *Hallowe'en*, the *Cotter's Saturday Night*, and several others of his now celebrated productions, were included in the volume. At once modest and distinct in self-assertion is the preface with which the ploughman-poet introduced his verses. While indulging in gratuitous self-depreciation as compared with Allan Ramsay or Fergusson, "the author tells him [the possible critic] once for all that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities."

This was the crisis of Burns's life. The book was well received from the first, and cleared for its writer the small but acceptable sum of nearly £20. A letter came from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of Burns, which entirely overthrew the poet's Jamaica scheme, enlarged his practical views, and encouraged him to try his opportunities in Edinburgh. He arrived in the Scottish capital in November 1786, without either acquaintances there or letters of introduction: but he soon got to know all sorts of leading people, whether in literature or in fashion and social rank, and surprised all by his brilliant conversational powers, though he was not forward in talking unless he had something substantial to say. His

demeanour was worthy of his exceptional position in its complicated bearings; and he was above any of the tricks of a man who is showing off, or allowing others to show him off. He spent two winters in Edinburgh, leaving the city finally in February 1788; meanwhile he had been visiting various other parts of Scotland, and had crossed the English border to Newcastle and Carlisle. A new edition of his poems, under the patronage of Dugald Stewart and many other celebrities, had been published in Edinburgh in April 1787; it consisted of 2800 copies, for which a subscription-list of 1500 names had been obtained, and it brought in nearly £600 to the poet. So far all was well. But Burns, already too convivial as an Ayrshire peasant, naturally grew still more convivial as the cynosure of social gatherings in Edinburgh; and the *éclat* and excitement of this episode in his history were not the natural precursors and props for retired, laborious country-life, in which hard field-work was again to be his means of subsistence, and the alleviator of his load was to be the rustic Jean Armour. The latter, it should be mentioned, presented her lover, in the spring of 1788, with a second pair of twins, who died almost immediately; for she and Burns had met again during one of the intervals of his Edinburgh sojourn, when her parents naturally courted his return. Her second frailty caused her exclusion from the paternal home; but some degree of reconciliation had been attained by the time of her delivery. Burns's enamoured correspondence with Mrs. M'Lehose (the "Clarinda" of his Letters) was going on at its hottest about the same period.

In the early summer of 1788 Burns returned to Ayrshire. He espoused Jean by making a public declaration of marriage; liberally advanced £180 to his brother Gilbert, to give him a start in life; and took for himself a somewhat considerable farm at Ellisland in Dumfries-shire. Here he was domiciled before the end of June, and resumed, among other rural

occupations, the exercise of his skill as a ploughman, at which (it is pleasant to learn) he was a capital hand. Soon, however, he found that his income needed eking out; and, as nothing more congenial offered as an outlet for his energies, he applied to be appointed excise-officer for his own vicinity, and obtained this post through the interest of Mr. Graham of Fintray. His pay was at first the pittance of £50 per annum, increased after a time to £70.

Burns an exciseman is a rather dejecting picture to contemplate. Still, if we exclude idealisms and prejudices, and take a plain common-sense view of the practicalities of the case, it might seem that the peasant poet, married to his early sweetheart who proved an affectionate wife; settled on a farm of his own, the management of which he understood; enthusiastically admired for his genius by his countrymen, from the noblest duke to the most tattered gaberlunzie; habitually writing short pieces which he could throw off rapidly athwart a pressure of occupations, and which he could readily get published at once in some form or other, thereby keeping his name and fame in ever fresh remembrance; and having a small settled income, from a government post, to fall back upon—was not, as human lots go, a person worthy of mere commiseration, and altogether battered by the Fates. We hear of his having two men and two women-servants; nine or ten milch-cows; some young cattle; four horses; and several pet sheep, of which he was fond. The position looks like an endurable one to begin with, and likely to continue in a steady course of quiet progressive improvement. Unfortunately this was not to be. The centre of Burns's hopes of material comfort and independence was his farm: but, after he had been there about three years and a half, he found that his duties in the excise interfered with the satisfactory conduct of husbandry work, and he gave the farm up. It may indeed be surmised that, if his habits had been steadier, and himself more faithful to the severe traditions

of his father's life, if he had not allowed the jolly dogs and loose fishes of his neighbourhood to prey upon his leisure, and if he had not grown a more and more helpless slave of the devil of drink, he might have sufficed for both occupations. However that may be, he did not thus suffice: and we may well infer that things had come to a bad pass with the farm when Burns, having to make his option between that and a government stipend of £70 a year, chose the latter as the mainstay of his household. About the end of 1791 he removed to a small house in the town of Dumfries (how many thousands of people have looked since then with reverence on its mean outside!) and here he remained for the brief residue of his life.

Burns had a certain Jacobite and tory tone of political sentiment; but every great and unprosperous genius, born in the lower ranks of society, is a potential democrat; and the era of the French Revolution was not one to leave the secret places of such a soul unstirred. More than once Burns used some expressions regarding the Revolution not strictly befitting an officer in the excise service of King George the Third—rather suitable to a man of genius and insight: this spoiled his prospects in the excise, and very nearly resulted in his dismissal. The chances open to his aspirations were that he might within a moderate number of years rise to the position of supervisor, with about £200 a-year, any amount of hard work, and no leisure—and then, after another interval of years, to the post of collector, at about £300 to £400. This latter promotion would have relieved him from the severer toils of business, and would have satisfied his desires. "A life of literary leisure, with a decent competence, is the summit of my wishes," he said in one of his letters. In fact, however, he never rose out of the ranks in the excise service.

The majority of the songs which Burns wrote subsequently to his first Edinburgh edition were sent to *Johnson's Scots Musical Museum*, published in that city, and, at a later date, to

the *Collection of Original Scottish Airs* edited and published by Mr. George Thomson. In this work he wrote the words for many long-popular melodies—a field for the exercise of his genius which roused his heartiest and most generous sympathies. His first letter replying to Mr. Thomson's application is dated the 16th of September 1792, and absolutely declines the offered payment. It gives one a salutary thrill to think of this great poet, oppressed with the cares of a family, drudging through a hard, uncongenial, and most scantily paid employment, the fineness of his nature dulled by drink, his strong frame beginning to feel the inroads of disease, yet rising superior to all low-hearted suggestions, and even to the perfectly reasonable and fair promptings of his position, and with a glorious burst of patriotic love refusing to be a penny the richer in pocket for the pure ore of everlasting song with which he again and again dowered his country. For about four years he adhered to his self-denying ordinance; and, in one instance, when Mr. Thomson had of his own accord sent him a small sum, Burns — although, out of consideration for his correspondent, he did not send the money back—warned him never to repeat the experiment. At last, however, he was compelled to give in. After being seriously ill for about a year, and thus almost prevented from contributing to Thomson's publication, he was obliged, on the 12th of July 1796, to ask for a payment of £5 to meet a haberdasher's bill.

Ill health, mental dejection, and pecuniary straits, had indeed now encompassed Burns round on every side. He had sunk into an habitual tippler—not a contented one. Remorse was gnawing at him continually. He had always had and still retained a strong tincture of religious feeling, though not of what passes for orthodoxy: he could hardly be regarded as a believer in revelation, but clung hard to the idea of a future life. In money matters he continued honourable, and at his decease he left no debts. Rheumatic pains, and other

maladies consequent upon his irregularities, assailed him; he became captious with his wife, whose affection had nevertheless worn well; then fever supervened, closing in delirium. The poet lay on his deathbed, while his wife, expecting another confinement, was incapable of tending him; harassed also by the pertinacity of some lawyer, on whom one of his latest utterances bestowed a curse.

The end came on the 21st of July 1796. Burns died, aged thirty-seven years and a half. The nation which had afforded him the post and the annual £70 of an excise officer did not cease to remember him in death. On the 25th, the very day when his last child was born, a public funeral was accorded to his remains, and was attended by vast multitudes. He left behind him, with his widow, four sons; a fifth had died in infancy. A considerable sum was raised for their benefit. Soon also an edition of Burns's poems—complete so far as the then known materials allowed—was brought out under the editorship of a cordial admirer, Dr. Currie, an eminent physician in Liverpool. It fostered the poet's fame, but was not needed to establish this: for in fact there is hardly in all literature an instance of such immediate and immense popularity—permeating the whole body politic of his countrymen—as that of Burns's poems. Everybody understood them, everybody enjoyed them; all were proud that Scotland should have produced a Burns, that he should reflect so much and such expressly national renown on his country, and that themselves should be the sons of such a land, and compatriots of such a man. This enthusiastic acceptance of their native poet is certainly a great glory to Scotchmen: and any one who is bent upon remembering to their discredit that they left the man Burns to live and die an exciseman should bear in mind also that they had already reposited the poet Burns in their heart of hearts, and that at this minute there are probably ten Scotchmen to whom Burns and his work are breathing and potent realities, for one

Englishman to whom Shakespeare is any more than a name. It may certainly be said that, the more they admired the poet, the less willing should his countrymen have been to leave the man huddled in obscurity: this (as I said at starting) is a point already more than sufficiently debated elsewhere.

At the present time of day it would be almost a futility to analyse, in such space and in such method as I have at my disposal, the individual or characteristic merits of the poems of Burns. Every Scotchman is born to an intuition of them: which is as much as saying that whatever is strongest, deepest, broadest, and finest, in that remarkable concrete the Scotch national character, finds its quintessence in these immortal verses. The ideal Scotchman is the man to whom Burns's poems most come home. They give all his distinctive faculties and foibles; only with this modification necessary to the excellence of the poetic result, that the prudential and prosaic attributes—what one might call the minus quantities—of the Scotch character are left in proportion less than the reality, while the plus quantities—the geniality, fervency, and even rampancy, of whatever kind—are thrown in with a prodigal and affectionate exuberance. But all are there—the less as well as the more kindly excesses. Burns is in fact the demi-god—the prophet, priest, and king—of Scotland: the Scotchman who, more than any other man or men, knits together at the present moment Scotchmen all over the globe, and may prolong and intensify for ages the nationalizing work in which the Battle of Bannockburn and the anti-prelatical reformation under Knox were earlier yet it may be hardly so powerful coefficients. This is after all the greatest of Burns's many and great poetic merits—that he has Scoticized poetry;[1] has established an unbounded ascendant over the Scottish mind, and has

[1] In saying this, we are of course not to forget the precursors of Burns's poetry—the glorious old Scottish Ballads, and more recently Allan Ramsay &c.

drawn to him all hearts of his countrymen like the draught of a roaring fiery furnace. The merit is one not so easily assessable by criticism as by history: but, where it exists, as here, in pre-eminent degree, criticism has pretty well to abdicate her functions, and confess that a greater than herself is the arbiter. But, beyond this (and excluding all minor considerations), we have to recognize in especial three superb gifts in Burns's poetry:—a power of clear piercing expression; a perfect soul of singable or declaimable song; and, above all, a sympathy so vivid and intimate as to pass continually into the domain of imagination, and give forth imaginative results and potencies. Of defects or inequalities of value in various poems or classes of poems by Burns, I need not here say a word.

Burns was nearly five feet ten in height, with black curly hair and dark eyes: every one knows the general look of his portraits. He was quick-tempered—sudden and voluble in resentments. Though he wrote so many poems for musical airs, he had little or no technical knowledge of music: he even had no ear for tunes, and his voice was unmelodious, at any rate in his earlier youth. At one time he meditated writing a national drama. Of the works which he actually executed, he regarded *Tam O' Shanter*, the product of a single day, with most predilection. This masterpiece was written at Ellisland, and was first published in 1793.

POETS BORN BETWEEN BURNS AND WORDSWORTH.

CHARLES COLEMAN JUN.	1762 to 1836.
WILLIAM LISLE BOWLES	1762 to 1850.
SAMUEL ROGERS	1763 to 1855.
JOANNA BAILLIE	1765 to 1851.
LADY NAIRNE	1766 to 1845.
JOHN HOOKHAM FRERE	1769 to 1846.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

THE long life of Wordsworth was an extremely uneventful one. He was eminently a *mental* man (if such an expression may be permitted us): the history of his thoughts, and of their product his writings, is the history of his life; the external incidents count for little. That he was an uncommon thinker did not render him a very uncommon English citizen of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It may even be said that his mental elevation made him all the more content to be in act and fact one of the herd: sublime from one point of view, he was more than undistinguished—almost commonplace —from another. Through life he flitted a substantial but quite ordinary figure—it would have been difficult to discriminate him while he was there, or to remember him afterwards: in the realm of thought he lives potent and perennial.

William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth in Cumberland on the 7th of April 1770, of a respectable old Yorkshire family, his father being law-agent to the local magnate, soon afterwards created Lord Lonsdale. One of William's brothers, Christopher, became also a prominent man in his own department, rising to be D.D., and Master of Trinity College, Cambridge. Both the brothers spent some years at the grammar-school of Hawkshead, Lancashire. The mother, Anne Cookson, died early. William, a sturdy, big-boned, and adventurous lad, began in childhood, towards the age of ten, to feel the fascination of verse. From fifteen or so onwards he made several attempts at poetizing on his own account, but

it was not till about 1788 that he seriously conceived the idea and the hope that he might himself be predestined a poet. Some of the verses reprinted in his complete works date as early as 1786.

In 1787 he was entered of St. John's College, Cambridge, and in due course of time, 1791, took his degree as B.A. In all his studies there were a certain soundness and gravity which made them beneficial to him: yet he does not appear to have been imbued with any zeal for the university system or its administrators, or with any ardent aspiration after knowledge. He admired but did not enter at all deeply into mathematics.

While still a Cambridge student, in 1790, he made a continental trip on foot, with his friend the Rev. Robert Jones. He reached Calais on the day of the great federative festival; and was both exhilarated and impressed by the outburst of vivid national enthusiasm and high-soaring hopes which he witnessed in all directions during his tour of fourteen weeks. Returning to England, he stayed in London for about a year. He then again, from the autumn of 1791, visited France, and was at Blois at the downfall of the monarchy in August 1792. He saw, for months before this event, the irrepressible revolutionary ferment, accompanied as yet with few actual violences. From early youth he had been conscious of very lukewarm liking for the pomp and pride, the traditions and associations, of monarchy, and indeed had never felt much interest in historic study, or in contemporary questions of public moment. Now his indifference to monarchy developed into aversion, while his political coolness caught the glow of patriotic enthusiasm. He became ardent in the cause of liberty; and found much encouragement and delight in the friendship of a noble military officer named Beaupuis, who, inspired with the like sentiments in an extreme degree, and in all ways a magnanimous and exalted character, was looked at much askance by his colleagues of the royal army. This high-souled

patriot died a little later while in a position of command on the Loire. Wordsworth had no gifts of eloquence: but such was his tension of spirit in the cause of the revolution in France that he would probably have taken some active part in the public movements of that great country and epoch, had it not been that circumstances called him decisively homewards. After an absence of about a year and a quarter he again returned to London as his dwelling-place. Soon afterwards, in 1793, he published his first volume, named the *Evening Walk, and Descriptive Sketches in Verse*, giving a poetical account of his pedestrian tour on the continent.

Wordsworth's Gallic enthusiasm was such as can be easily understood at the present day; our contemporaries are still privileged to feel it in some degree, much toned down though it is by long and trying postponements, and by meagre instalments of fruition. He hailed the advent of a new era, not only of political emancipation and material well-being, but also of lofty virtue, intellectual enterprise, and public righteousness. To him the cause of France was the cause of man—the triumph of the republic the dawnstreak of a millennium. It was therefore with a feeling of genuine horror and bitter shame that he found his own country very soon entering into the coalition of war against France: and he was so far a cosmopolitan, rather than an Englishman, that he even exulted in the reverses which befell Great Britain and the successes which attended the French arms, and mourned when the contrary ensued. Not that he sympathized with those hardy and immitigable republicans who were now wielding all the energies and all the terrors of the great nation: the downfall of the Girondists, and the supremacy of a Robespierre and a Danton, were not the republic of Wordsworthian orthodoxy; and he triumphed when he heard in 1794 that the Incorruptible —he also—was guillotined. In after years, in his poem of the *Prelude*, completed in 1805, Wordsworth still kept enough of

the opinions of his youth to maintain that the evil in the French Revolution arose, not from the principle of liberty and progress, but from the results of past oppression; he loathed the lapse of France from a republic of enlightenment into an empire of military force; and he deplored the recurring servitude of mankind, who had at one august moment appeared capable and ready to emerge from it.

After his return from abroad, Wordsworth, although he called London for a while his head-quarters, made desultory excursions into Wales and several parts of rural England; at one time he was settled in a cottage at Allfoxden, near Stowey, Somersetshire. A young friend named Raisley Calvert, dying, bequeathed him a legacy of £900, sufficient, with his moderate desires and habits, to relieve him from the compulsory adoption of some profession as a means of living: this discerning friend had conceived a strong idea of the poetic endowments of Wordsworth, and of the great things he might have it in him to achieve under favouring conditions. About this period the poet's mind took a turn towards scepticism, of which his political despondencies and despair of public good may have been chiefly the cause: his dearly loved sister, who lived with him, expostulated and roused him, and he soon banished such thoughts, and never again fell under their spell.

Finding no assured stay in any political institutions or speculations, yet with a deep-grounded feeling of the powers of the natural man for good, and the beneficent influences of Nature, Wordsworth now began making an earnest study of the characters and minds of men in humble life. He found here much to admire and sympathize with — much to sustain his hopes: and he longed to become the poet of man unsophisticated. In 1798 he published his *Lyrical Ballads*, comprising some contributions by Coleridge, for whom he had already formed and afterwards retained a very affectionate and warmly admiring friendship. The volume was mostly derided: but it

succeeded in the great feat of forming its own public, and within that circle was not only accepted, but enthusiastically prized. The Preface to its second edition is a remarkable piece of writing, worthy of serious examination, and fertile of much in its own time and up to our days. Wordsworth's main effort in this volume of poems was to adapt to metrical arrangement such language as is really spoken by men under vivid sensation, to the total exclusion of the conventional way of writing termed "poetic diction." He aimed also to give his compositions a certain colouring of imagination, and to trace in the incidents the primary laws of our nature, chiefly as to the manner in which, when in a state of excitement, we associate ideas. He professed to have a purpose always in what he wrote, trivial or jejune as it might sometimes appear—a purpose, though not invariably a prepense and fully conscious one. Another leading point, as he himself observes, is that the feeling is made to give importance to the situation, not the latter to the former. He regarded humble life as a more limpid medium wherein to show forth all these properties of intention and execution; and he accordingly, for the most part, dealt with that.

The origin of the *Lyrical Ballads* is thus authentically narrated by Coleridge: — "During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry—the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination. The sudden charm which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset, diffused over a known and familiar landscape, appeared to represent the practicability of combining both. These are the *poetry* of Nature. The thought suggested itself (to which of us I do not recollect) that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents

were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real. And 'real' in this sense they have been to every human being who, from whatever source of delusion, has at any time believed himself under supernatural agency. For the second class, subjects were to be chosen from ordinary life; the characters and incidents were to be such as will be found in every village and its vicinity, where there is a meditative and feeling mind to seek after them, or to notice them when they present themselves. In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*, in which it was agreed that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic—yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief, for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself, as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us—an inexhaustible treasure, but for which, in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude, we have eyes yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand. With this view I wrote *The Ancient Mariner*, and was preparing, among other poems, *The Dark Ladie* and the *Christabel*, in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry had proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter."

In 1802 Wordsworth married Miss Mary Hutchinson, of Penrith, in Cumberland, and settled at Grasmere, Westmoreland. His house, Rydal Mount, which he entered upon in 1813, soon became a celebrated spot — one might almost say a hallowed spot, as his calm years increased, and a younger generation came to hail in him the patriarch of English poetry, the seer of lowly and natural life, and the lofty contemplator of the permanent in the shifting, the essential in the phenomenal, the spiritual in the physical world.

As far back as 1799 he had begun, and in 1805 he completed, his autobiographical blank-verse poem, the *Prelude, or Growth of a Poet's Mind:* it remained unpublished until 1850. He undertook this work as a kind of self-exploration, preliminary to attempting some further *opus magnum*, on which, duly prepared for and providently elaborated, he might be able to stake his poetic fame, with some confidence in the verdict of posterity. This project finally took form in the *Excursion*, published in 1814. That poem, slightly ponderous in more ways than one, is not, however, *the* work, but only a portion thereof; the whole composition was to be named the *Recluse*, and of this the *Excursion* was, in the mind of its author, only a third in bulk and a second part in serial sequence. The remainder has never seen the light: I suppose but little if any of it was written, save the first book of the first part, which slumbers in MS. Many things which were to serve as materials for the residue have, however, been utilized in other poems of the author. The principal subject-matter of the *Recluse* was to have been "the sensations and opinions of a poet living in retirement."

Meanwhile, in 1807, Wordsworth had issued a second volume of *Ballads;* and in 1809 had published his almost sole prose work, a pamphlet on *The Convention of Cintra*, and the relations of England, Spain, and Portugal, urging vigorous prosecution of the Spanish war against Napoleon. His poli-

opinions had by this time taken the course which those of an Englishman very generally *do* take. Without entirely renouncing his speculative ideas of old time, he was, when the practical question presented itself, on the side of "law and order" and of "the social hierarchy"; and not merely on the side of these things in the abstract and for general purposes, but in the concrete and for English purposes. In short, the tory ingredient, that backbone of the vertebrate animal named John Bull, was predominant in him now and henceforth: social rather than political toryism is here in question, but the two things have very delicate connexions, and the sensory nerves of the social tory continually serve as motor nerves for the political tory. In or about the same year that the *Excursion* appeared in print, Wordsworth, hitherto the reverse of a well-to-do man, received the reward of his increasing conformity to the "correct" order of things, being appointed, through the influence of the Lowther (or Lonsdale) family, Distributor of Stamps for the counties of Westmoreland and Cumberland—an appointment which brought him in a substantial addition of income, and left the greater part of his time at his own disposal. The poet retained this post up to 1842, when he resigned in favour of his son.

At Rydal Mount, Wordsworth was living near his friend Southey. Everybody knows the nickname of Lake Poets or Lakeists, or "the Lake School," applied to these writers, and their intimate and colleague Coleridge. There is not very much meaning in the term, nor cohesiveness in the poetic position of the trio—especially of Southey as related to Coleridge and Wordsworth. Certainly Wordsworth often wrote about lakes, as well as about the other objects of natural scenery which spurted his eye and affected his tone of thought day by day—*could not, by any reasonable likelihood, fail to do so*: and items by Coleridge and by Southey, describing or referring to lakes, may also, no doubt, be picked out. The same is the

case with Byron and with Shelley: with what poet is it *not* the case? But there is a longish gap between this state of things and a Lake *School*. At the present day "the Lake School" has sunk into the condition of a mere cant phrase—it has little significance and less importance; almost as little of either as that other name, invented (I believe) by Southey for Byron and some other widely-separated writers—"the Satanic School"—or "the Cockney School," as applied to poets of varying talents and aims whose avocations domiciled them in or near London —Leigh Hunt, Keats, and others. It was a satisfaction to Southey to invent a mouthing term of opprobrium round which all the stupid and spiteful prejudices of uninformed and unenlarged minds might congregate: "the Satanic School" was doubtless a *eureka* in its inventor's eyes. And similarly it was a convenience to some emptier writer, in a mood of less malignity, to say "the Lake School" when he meant the three very diverse writers, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey. There is no harm in the term; or only thus much harm—that people who knew nothing of the subject, or of the many matters needing to be discriminated as between the three poets, repeated it with that glib assurance which carries a sort of feeble self-applause, and thereby got to suppose they were critical and clever, and had somehow assessed these writers at no more than their due rating. If, however, we set aside the name of "the Lake School," and speak of Wordsworth singly as "the Lake Poet," or poet of the English lake-country, the name is appropriate enough. Scenery, and the impressions of scenery, and the character of peasant life, are all most important elements of his poetry; and, as these are moreover all powerfully localized, and their particular localization determined by his place of well-nigh life-long residence, the North-English lake-region, he really does correspond to this designation. Only, when we use it, we must still remember that it is no description: it simply defines a matter of fact connected with Wordsworth's life and

poetic subject-matter, and leaves his rank and quality untouched.

The remainder of Wordsworth's career presents little matter for record beyond what is directly related to his poems. In 1815 he published the *White Doe of Rylstone;* in 1819, *Peter Bell*, and also the *Waggoner*. *Peter Bell* was the production of long years. Just before it came out, a burlesque, under the same title, written by John Hamilton Reynolds (author of the *Garden of Florence*, &c.), was issued to the world, and caused some mystification; and this was followed by Shelley's *Peter Bell the Third*—which, however, did not appear in print earlier than 1839, many years after the death of its author. Shelley had in early youth admired and reverenced Wordsworth with great fervour: but his sentiments for the *protégé* of Lord Lonsdale and rhapsodist of the Allied Sovereigns were by no means alike cordial, nor did he consider *Peter Bell* at all the right sort of thing to be put forward as a poem. Wordsworth was somewhat fiercely dealt with by Shelley in *Peter Bell the Third;* but one cannot exactly pity him, even apart from the question of whether or not he deserved to be thus treated. It were a nice point of casuistry to determine whether there is more of honour or of obloquy in being made the subject of a satirical poem, when the satirist is so stupendous a poetic genius as Shelley. If Justice Shallow represents Sir Thomas Lucy, that obscure country gentleman has been ridiculed by Shakespeare into an immortality as enduring as that of the dramatist himself—surely not the hardest fate that could befall a simpleton. True, Wordsworth needed no Shelley to give him an enduring name, nor banter as passport to remembrance; but, as the Italians say, *ben gli stà*—he has attained that particular form of association with the godlike Shelley, and any form of association with *him* involves some compensation. It may here be added that Wordsworth (as we learn from Mr. Trelawny's book of *Records*) thought nothing of Shelley up to the last year

or so of that poet's life; possibly he had heard obscure rumours of *Peter Bell the Third* and its authorship, and at any rate was wholly unfamiliar with Shelley's works: afterwards he read them, and freely allowed that their writer was the greatest master of harmony among modern poets.[1]

In 1820 appeared Wordsworth's *Sonnets on the River Duddon; Vaudracour and Julia, and other Poems;* and *Ecclesiastical Sonnets;* in 1822, his *Memorials of a Tour on the Continent* (recently undertaken in company with his wife and sister), and *Description of the Scenery of the Lakes in the North of England, with Illustrative Remarks on the Scenery of the Alps.* In April 1845, on the decease of Southey, he was appointed Poet Laureate—a post in which, as his living successor Tennyson says, he "uttered nothing base." He died at Rydal Mount, on the 23rd of April 1850, beloved and honoured, and, by a large and then increasing number of zealots, regarded as not only the greatest poet of the age, but as almost an inspired medium of communication of large Divine truths to men. Upon many poets of his own and later days his influence has been apparent; but perhaps it is a prose-writer, Ruskin, who, preaching Wordsworth with conviction and fervency, has most availed to reimpart, diffuse, and fertilize his teachings.

Wordsworth was a tall, large, strong man, with a face in which one could discern intellect if one attended to it, but which did not tempt one towards attending to it much. Casual inspection would have set him down as an ordinary prosaic-looking person enough—a middle-class man, of active country habits, unpretentious and inconspicuous bearing, and regulated life. Careless rather than otherwise in dress, he was on the whole

[1] See also, in Mr. Grosart's edition of Wordsworth's *Prose Works*, the following expressions:—"Shelley is one of the best *artists* of us all; I mean in workmanship of style." "He told us he thought the greatest of modern geniuses, had he given his powers a proper direction, and one decidedly superior to Byron, was Shelley, a young man, author of *Queen Mab*."

pleasant and courteous in company. De Quincey was unfair in saying that Wordsworth was austere and unsocial, and would not take any good-natured little trouble, such as carrying a lady's parasol on occasion. It may, however, be true that he was not to be called a practically self-denying or generous man; but neither was he a money-seeker. He was temperate, without fastidiousness or punctilio; at one time (or it may be very generally) only a water-drinker. He had undoubtedly a high opinion of his own powers and performances; and not only this, but also a habit of self-study and self-concentration which kept him talking a great deal about himself, and very faintly interested in other men, achievements, or endeavours in the literary world. He often wrote at night; but his usual habit was to dictate, rather than write with his own hand. "He never wrote down as he composed; but composed walking, riding, or in bed, and wrote down after." As regards what has been called his "political tergiversation," candid men at the present day are probably mostly agreed in thinking that the charge cannot be maintained in any very positive or damnatory sense. Wordsworth, by the nature of his mind, was not a politician at all—not a man of system or theory in governmental or social matters. He *was* a man of deep sympathy with virtue, and with all that makes our kind sensitive and harmonious to the finest influences of Nature. In his youth the French Revolution had opened out prospects of glorious developments in this direction, which afterwards he considered, whether fairly or faint-heartedly, to have been belied, perverted, and fallacious—indeed disastrous. The natural consequence was that he retired more and more from a sphere of thought—the political—with which he had very small natural affinity; left politics to take their own course and form around him, with a degree of acquiescence on his own part which increased from the conventionally respectful to the cheerfully compliant; and retreated into his own world of ideas and contemplations,

at once less agitated and more spacious and aboriginal. It cannot rightly be said that he ever gave up or shirked his interest in humble life as such, or the broad humanity of his feelings and conceptions. Had he been pointed out by Nature for a politician, indeed, it must have been averred that he turned tail, and patched up a suspicious truce, if not a positive alliance, with the enemy: but he was *not* so pointed out, and therefore candour calls upon us to test his conduct by a different standard. For his contemporaries, such as Shelley, this may have been next to impossible: for us now it is both possible and obligatory. But the fact certainly lessens our warmth of *liking* for Wordsworth.

It is also, I think, true that a certain crust of "Respectability," perceptible even in the youthful Wordsworth, continued to increase upon him unpleasantly, and to clog and warp the clear and pure *contours* of his mind. He was certainly, and in a high sense, the poet of Men in Humble Life: but Respectability intervened, and obstructed his becoming either the poet of *Man* in his fullest dimensions, natural in mode of life, unsophisticated by circumstances, uncramped by scruples—or else, like Burns, the genuine outspoken voice of the peasant, with the peasant's full heart, liberal nature, free tongue, and patent faults.

Wordsworth as a poet is in a certain sense easy, but in a deeper sense difficult, to appraise: the very ease of criticizing him constitutes part of the difficulty. Some points to be stated regarding him are so plain, and moreover so damaging, that one feels embarrassed in fitting them in to the general framework, and explaining in scanty space how lofty, as a whole, is the honour to be accorded to the poet. The best preparation for reading his works is his own preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, with the other prose matter annexed to it; the best criticism whereby to revise one's impressions derived immediately from perusal of the poems is that given by Coleridge in his *Biographia*

Literaria. From the former of these two sources of information, the reader will note that Wordsworth regards all good poetry as "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings"; insists much on pleasure as a necessary element of all poetry, and even of all knowledge of whatsoever kind; and opines that, in works of imagination or sentiment, both in prose and in verse, the language assimilates in proportion to the intrinsic value of the feelings and ideas embodied. In Coleridge's criticism it is propounded that the power of giving a novel enforcement and significance to old truths is Wordsworth's predominant characteristic.

Without following further in detail the observations, paramount as they are in value for our purpose, of Wordsworth himself and of his illustrious friend Coleridge, I shall here submit the few points which occur to myself as apposite in closing these remarks. The essence of Wordsworth's mind in poetry is contemplative imagination; imagination direct, extensive, and sympathetic, but so far contemplative as to interfere very gravely with its working impressiveness.[1] The Americans have a habit of saying that So-and-so is or is not a "magnetic" man: they have often, for instance, said this latter of General Grant. Whether based or not on true notions in physiology, this is a very available laconism, and may serve us here: Wordsworth was not a magnetic man, and is consequently not a magnetic poet. Not that he is *incapable* of magnetism: he is at times wonderfully charged with it, and produces an impression as sudden, as acute, and as profound as almost any poet that could

[1] Shelley, writing of himself to Godwin (December 1817), said: "In this have I long believed that my power consists: in sympathy, and that part of the imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation." It is remarkable that nearly the same thing can truthfully—*more* truthfully perhaps—be said of Wordsworth, a poet so exceedingly different from Shelley in general tone. The greatest divergence is in that quality of "sympathy." Shelley felt and excited sympathy. Wordsworth felt it; but he often (as our text indicates) both felt and expressed it without exciting it from the majority of his readers, and some readers there are from whom he can scarcely ever excite it.

be named. Further than this, there are some natures, peculiarly analogous to his own, which find him very frequently or even generally magnetic: and *any* readers who value and enter into poetry are likely to think Wordsworth, on prolonged and repeated reading, far more magnetic than they had at first supposed. Still the fact remains that, with all his imagination, all his intimate knowledge of Nature, all his deep and pure feeling, all his command of poetic resource, he is not, in the large sense, a fascinating or attractive writer. His contemplativeness, combined with what was called above his "respectability," is mainly in fault. He has himself pondered too much what he wants to say, what he means to say, why he wants and means it, whether it is right to want and mean it, and how to say it. In fact, he is too conscientious and too little instinctive for a poet. Simple he often is, even to baldness—the extreme of this is one of his leading defects; sympathetic he most assuredly is in passages or entire compositions continually recurring throughout his volumes; spontaneous he both seems and is very often, according to his own standard of spontaneity. But even simplicity, and the sympathetic and spontaneous qualities, do not quite suffice for his purpose with the reader: there is too much background for them (if one may use the phrase)—they come out of a nature at once too passively receptive, and too self-conscious of the process of reception and of after reproduction. He is a meditative and intensive poet—as such admirable, perhaps unequalled; but, if people will not accept that in full of all poetic demands, there is nothing to compel them to do so, and Wordsworth has no more to give them.

I shall not dwell here on some express blemishes which are nevertheless very truly stated and very banefully operative—such as occasional triviality, more frequent bathos, and prosing lengthiness more frequent still. The upshot of these objections is that Wordsworth has bad defects, which are specially annoying inasmuch as they are specially anti-poetic. After all

this has been allowed for and acknowledged, and after we have even excluded altogether in our minds the poems or passages open to such a censure, the residue remains, and constitutes Wordsworth a most true poet—indeed, a very exalted and a great one; with emotion to move us, purity and simplicity to charm, imagination to upraise, and beauties of art to delight; but wanting certain dramatic and impulsive qualities, without which the relation between a poet and his reader remains, however genuine, a not quite final and complete relation.

The Prodigal Son said to his Father, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." If we transfer this conception from the region of morals or religion to that of poetry, and imagine the poetic son of Father Apollo, overwhelmed with the privileges and heights of sonship, petitioning his parent to be "as one of his hired servants," and, taken at his word, we have a tolerable image of Wordsworth. He *is* a son of Apollo; he works with exquisite humility, and at the same time with a lofty filial feeling, and a self-respect all the more vital through its outward abnegation: yet the work which he produces is not absolutely son's work, but partly servant's work, and would look wholly so at times, but that other portions of it keep us better informed.

WALTER SCOTT.

WALTER SCOTT is, *pari passu* with Lord Byron (and still more signally in the popular sense), the British-born author of by far the greatest world-wide fame among all who have flourished within a century past. Dickens might almost be added to their company so far as prose-writing is concerned: the double tiara of prose and of poetry belongs to Scott alone among the three.

He was born in Edinburgh, on the 15th of August 1771 (the same day of the month as the great Napoleon, but two years later on), and died at Abbotsford, the creation of his own genius and enthusiasm, on the 21st of September 1832. This space of but sixty-one years must always seem short to his admirers for the multifarious product and activity of his life—a life in which literary exertion, though the predominant, was by no means the sole thing open to the notice of his contemporaries.

Born with a naturally strong constitution, Walter Scott suffered nevertheless much early illness. He had attained the twenty-second month of his infancy, when one morning his right leg was found to be powerless and perfectly cold: hence ensued a lameness which proved unsusceptible of cure, and which remained with him all his life. In his fifth year, a lonely, contemplative boy, he went to reside with his grandfather at Sandy Knowe, on the Tweed, near Kelso; and afterwards to the house of a maiden aunt, who took him off to Bath. This lady had an immense store of tales and legends: she was abundantly ready at imparting them to her nephew, and he was

still more eager as a listener than she as a narrator. In his eighth year he was removed from a private academy to the High School of Edinburgh; his vigorous, courageous, enjoying character asserted itself, and, spite of his lameness, he joined in most of the active sports of the schoolboys. In other matters his proficiency was nothing noticeable. In October 1783 he was transferred to Edinburgh University. Another casualty befell him about the end of the year 1784. He broke a blood-vessel, and remained confined to his bed for several weeks. In this second period of enforced inactivity, the habit of omnivorous reading—especially of anything having a romantic or traditional character—became powerfully confirmed. Scott read almost all the romances, old plays, and epics pertaining to a circulating library which formed his solace; tales of chivalry, *Cyrus* and *Cassandra*, the novels of modern days—all furnished alike his pabulum; his strong sympathetic nature, quick fancy, and enormously retentive memory assimilated and digested them all: (it is said that he was able to repeat the whole of Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope* after a couple of readings). He thus attained an early command of language; and a habit of inventing stories for the diversion of his college chums preluded the work of the future novelist. The chief enjoyment of Scott's holidays was to go out with a friend who had the like taste for tales, and the lads would then recite their wild inventions alternately: Arthur's Seat was a favourite spot for these performances, which were kept secret from the profane. The same tale, of knight-errantry or what not, would be continued from day to day. Nor had his early domestication with his grandfather failed to furnish its *quota* towards the same general direction of taste and faculty. The old gentleman was a farmer, who lived in habits of semi-patriarchal familiarity with his domestics; and many traits of unadulterated Scotch character were here seen by young Walter — and, if seen, assuredly noted.

In May 1786, relinquishing his wish for a military life, to which his lameness was a serious obstacle, he began an apprenticeship to his father, whose avocation was that of a Writer to the Signet, corresponding pretty nearly to an English attorney: this was the ordinary induction to the career of a Scottish Advocate, or barrister, for which Walter had already made some preliminary studies under Professor Dick. Henceforward his health took a new and stronger turn, and he suffered little from any illness. The father was a strict disciplinarian, and a man of spirit and principle—in religion a Presbyterian precisian, and in law a formalist: the household was regulated on a like pattern. The mother, Anne Rutherford, was daughter of a physician in extensive practice, Professor of Medicine in Edinburgh University; on the side of both parents, Walter was remotely connected with some ancient Scotch families. Neither of the parents, it may be remarked, had any poetical tendency, nor any noticeable gift of memory, in which their son was so potent.

As Scott advanced in years, he began—perhaps primarily with a view to health—to take long rambles, on foot or on horseback, through the Border and Highland counties where his father had relations or clients. He found many an out-of-the-way character, interesting to the feelings or the imagination, remaining from the political troubles of 1745 and the succeeding years—more especially interesting to Walter Scott, who himself came of a Jacobite stock: he saw much also of the lower ranks of society in the agricultural districts. On a visit to a paternal aunt and uncle near Kelso, he first, at the age of thirteen, became acquainted with a book destined to lead to much in his own future career—the Percy Ballads. Fascinated with these, he next read the similar collection by Evans, and that of Scottish Ballads by Herd. In his schooling, though neither brilliant nor diligent, he had made some progress in Latin, moral philosophy, ethics, and history; and he acquired

sooner or later an available acquaintance with the German, French, Italian, and Spanish languages. He was no adept in Greek, and in later life had forgotten even its alphabet. The same visit to the neighbourhood of Kelso had a powerful share in awakening the interest, so conspicuous in all his writings, for the beauties and influences of natural scenery.

An enquirer into the early traces of Scott's writing faculty may note some class-exercises which he composed under Dugald Stewart in 1790, and three essays which he read in the Edinburgh Speculative Society in 1792–93. His subjects were, the Manners and Customs of the Northern Nations of Europe; the Origin of the Feudal System; the Origin of the Scandinavian Mythology; and the Authenticity of Ossian's Poems — all of them themes entirely germane to the future bent of his genius. At an earlier date he had written an essay maintaining Ariosto to be a better poet than Homer: hence Dr. Dalziel had pronounced the rather precarious prophecy that "dunce he was, and dunce he would remain." This was a period of much intellectual activity in Edinburgh: the men who afterwards founded the *Edinburgh Review* were contemporaries of Scott.

The latter had made some attempts in verse even before reading Percy's *Reliques*. Some lines on the Setting Sun are dated in July 1783; some on Mount Ætna still earlier, 1782; and, towards the completion of his fifteenth year, he is said to have executed a poem in four books on the Conquest of Granada, which, however, he burned almost immediately. At the house of Professor Ferguson, about 1786, he had seen Burns; and had been impressed, as was befitting, by the view of the great poet of Scottish life, of whose successors he was destined to be the chief. For a period of about ten years, however, his rhyming propensities remained in abeyance: they were at length re-awakened by reading the ballads of Matthew Gregory Lewis, to whose *Tales of Wonder* he afterwards contributed. Towards the same time, in 1788, a lecture delivered

by Henry Mackenzie turned his attention to the German language. This he studied, but only in a desultory way, up to 1793 or 1794; when Miss Aiken (afterwards Mrs. Barbauld) brought to his notice some of the poems of Bürger. Hence resulted his earliest published poem — the *Helen and William* —paraphrased from that author's *Lenore*, and issued in 1796, along with the *Wild Huntsman*, also from Bürger.

Scott had never acted with any regularity as clerk in his father's legal business; he was constantly absent on the jaunts in which he so greatly delighted, and, when in the office, chess-playing divided his attention with law. In 1791 he finally resolved to adopt the profession of an Advocate: and recommenced his attendance at the College classes, but with some interruption from illness. In the same year he was admitted by the Faculty of Advocates to his first trials; in July 1792 he passed the residue, and was called to the bar, where he practised for a few years only. He showed himself active in the private business of the Faculty, and in the work of the Speculative Society. In the Civil Court he made only one professional appearance; but several in the Court of Justiciary, for which he was diligent in preparation; nor was there any lack of energy or of pushing talent in his general business habits. In several prosecutions for riot he appeared as counsel for the defendants. He also came forward prominently in organizing, more especially in the character of Quarter-master, a volunteer corps of horse, the Royal Edinburgh Light Dragoons, to act in case of French invasion or other sudden demand. In December 1799 he obtained, through the interest of the Melville and Buccleuch families, the appointment of Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire, which brought him in £300 per annum; in 1806, the more lucrative post of one of the Principal Clerks of the Court of Session, an office which still left him a good deal of leisure, and from which he did not retire till almost the close of his life, November 1830. The

full emoluments of this Clerkship (about £1300 per annum) did not accrue to him until the year 1812. He had already, since 1797, been in possession of a small landed property, to which he succeeded on the death of an uncle. At the end of the same year, 24th December, and soon after a disappointment in love with a Perthshire lady, he had married Miss Charlotte Margaret Carpenter, a lady of French birth and connexions, and with a moderate fortune, whom he met at the Cumbrian watering-place of Gilsland. Scott was thus a man more than tolerably prosperous in worldly circumstances, even apart from the large gains which his writings soon began to produce: about the date of publication of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, 1805, he had a clear income of at least £1000 a year. Neither money nor position was to him an object of indifference: he had a strong and growing ambition for aristocratic society — with which, indeed (as already observed), he was partly connected by birth. The young couple lived at first, on the happiest terms, in a cottage at Lasswade. Afterwards they dwelt at Ashestiel, a beautiful spot on the Tweed, as the Sheriff-Depute of Selkirkshire was bound to reside in that county during some part of the year.

From an early stage of his career of authorship—a career pre-eminently successful and famous from first to last — Scott resolved, with the prudence of a clear-sighted professional man, and of a man of the world to whom writing was only one outlet or expression of a wide and generous interest in life, that he would use literature "as a staff, not as a crutch." In 1799 he published his translations of Göthe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, and circulated privately his ballads of *Glenfinlas* and the *Eve of St. John*. The translation of *Götz* brought him in the moderate profit of £25. 5*s*.: the critics received it well, but the public remained chilly. His recognized and substantial position as an author can scarcely be said to have begun until he published, in 1802, the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*,

including some of his own imitations of the old ballad-poetry, along with forty traditional pieces never before published, and much prose illustration. A third volume of the work came out in 1803. He had paid, towards the beginning of the century, several visits to Liddisdale, and to Teviotdale, a locality then little known: here he collected many traditionary songs, and amassed besides a stock of observations afterwards utilized in the novel of *Guy Mannering:* indeed he had been a collector of ballads, in one way or another, from very early youth. With the *Border Minstrelsy* commenced also his connexion with commercial speculation in literature; a connexion which told for much in his shining prosperity of after years, but which at last proved the wreck of all his fortunes. Mr. James Ballantyne, then editor of a Kelso newspaper, received from his old schoolfellow Scott, and accepted, the offer to print the *Border Minstrelsy:* he procured for the purpose a new and fine fount of types, and the handsome appearance of the volumes established the reputation of the so-called "Border Press." Mr. Ballantyne shortly removed to Edinburgh, and set up business as printer on a large scale, in secret partnership with Scott, whose share in the business was one-third. The latter visited London in 1803, and managed to be on good terms with political opponents as well as sympathizers. He was again in London, and also in Paris, in 1826.

With the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, Walter Scott became a distinguished man: it was the best possible preparation for his fame as a poet in his own right, and on an extensive scale. It was first succeeded by an edition of *Sir Tristrem*, a poem written about A.D. 1280, and ascribed to Thomas the Rhymer (of Ercildoune): Scott added to the composition some completing lines of his own. In January 1805 he published the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, the first draught of which, in its present shape, had been written in the autumn of 1802: it was received with a tumult of applause, easily accounted for, not

only by its very considerable excellences of poetic work, but especially by the novelty of its scene and treatment, and its romantic attraction. Scott was, indeed, the first man of that epoch to make poetry the rage. Altogether, nearly 44,000 copies of the *Lay* had sold before the issue of the annotated edition of 1830. Readers were delighted to find some new source of interest opened up to them in poetry; jaded with the old subjects and the old methods—with whatsoever was recognized and right, respectable and conventional, the old clothes now threadbare, and the old viands now destructive of appetite—they got at last something fresh, full of stimulation in itself, and in the evidence which it everywhere presented of a lively, hearty, buoyant, and rejoicing nature, open to all impressions of the strength and sentiment of the past, and reproducing them in forms eminently quick-blooded. *Marmion*, issued in 1808, confirmed Scott's renown as a poet, and deserved to do so; at portions of it Scott, though mostly not a careful writer, worked with earnest application. He received £1000 for the poem from its publishers. His fame rose still higher, and attained its culmination with the publication, in May 1810, of the *Lady of the Lake*—which readers of the present day will be apt, however, to pronounce the least valuable work of the three. Twenty-thousand copies sold in a few months. Its pictures of Highland scenery, valour, and manners, naturally made it immensely attractive at the time, and produced a huge effect in popularizing the Highlands among tourists of an adventurous or sentimental turn. The *Vision of Don Roderick* followed in 1811. It was obviously little adapted to enhance the purely poetic reputation of its author; but the public circumstances of the time favoured its success. *Rokeby*, written in three months and a half at the close of 1812, and published in 1813, was again received with great applause; yet so far sobered down as to show that the *furor* for Scott was now already on the wane—not to speak of its own general tameness

and marked inferiority. The *Lord of the Isles* was written in 1814: it was better than *Rokeby*, but its reception again told the same tale of receding popularity, although a sale of fifteen-thousand copies could not at the lowest be called less than very tolerable. His two other leading poems were published anonymously, with a view to testing the genuine state of public feeling; the *Bridal of Triermain* in the same year that the *Lord of the Isles* was composed, 1814, and *Harold the Dauntless* in 1817. There was moreover the *Field of Waterloo*, 1815, the authorship of which was avowed. As to the *Bridal of Triermain*, a rather peculiar arrangement was adopted. The subject had been suggested to Scott by William Erskine, Lord Kinnedder; and an agreement was made with this legal dignitary that the poem, on appearing in print, should not be disowned by him. Two large editions sold off, and a third was called for: both parties to the quasi-deception then thought it had lasted long enough, and Scott proclaimed himself the author. A more potent despot was now ruling the world of poetry: Byron had finally eclipsed Scott by the publication of *Childe Harold* in 1812; and Scott's own numerous imitators had cheapened his wares, and made them almost as commonplace as they had a few years before been new in style. About this period he composed also some dramatic pieces, without either achieving or deserving success. They were published in 1822 and 1830.

Retreating from the poetic domain, he was already a ruler—and a still more powerful ruler—in another. His novel of *Waverley* appeared anonymously in July 1814. Some considerable while before this, the reading of Miss Edgeworth's *Pictures of Irish Life* had incited him to try whether he could accomplish something of the same kind for Scotland. He began writing his romance in 1805, and had produced some seven chapters or so; but an unfavourable judgment by a friend led him to set it aside. When ultimately it appeared, it made

rapid progress to fame; and, as we all know, this novel and its successors (*Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Old Mortality*, *Rob Roy*, *The Heart of Midlothian*, and others of later date) soon achieved an unbounded popularity. At the very first, Scott was not suspected to be the author; but surmise soon began to cling to his person, and strengthened as years elapsed, and, long before the actual avowal, he was thoroughly recognized as one with the "Great Unknown." This avowal was made in 1827, at the annual dinner of the Edinburgh Theatrical Fund Association: policy, not unmingled with caprice, had sealed his lips till then. The novels, of which it is not my function to offer here any account or any estimate, continued with little intermission to pour forth from the press from 1814 to 1826, and again from 1828 onwards.[1]

Besides poetry and romance, Scott was sufficiently active in other walks of literature. He contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* at its commencement, but quitted it in consequence of divergences of political opinion, and took a warm interest in the establishment of the *Quarterly*. His trade connexion with the Ballantynes, and through them with Constable and other publishers, led him to project many publications, in which he bore his part as editor or contributor. His *Life of Dryden* was published in 1808, that of Swift in 1814; both of them accompanying editions of the author's works. Besides these, he produced the biographical and critical preface to the Ballantyne Collection of English Novelists, and annotations to Sadleir's Correspondence, and other such books; *Paul's Letters to his Kinsfolk;* the articles on Chivalry, Romance, and the Drama, in the *Encyclopædia Britannica;* some papers of Tory politics in a weekly journal named *The Beacon;* an *Account of the Regalia of Scotland;* and several letters, signed "Malachi Malagrowther," opposing the equalization of the Scottish and English

[1] Scott, it may be noted, regarded Rebecca, the Jewish heroine of his *Ivanhoe*, as the finest of all his female characters.

monetary systems. As in whatever he did, there is, in productions of the critical class by Scott, a manly, straightforward character, more conspicuous than any quality of subtlety or original insight.

Famous, fully occupied, happy in domestic life, surrounded by numerous friends and acquaintances, wealthy, and loving society, Scott seemed one of the most fortunate of men. He had a rather weak-minded ambition—that of living like a feudal lord; and for a while he realized it with considerable *éclat*. In 1811 he bought a hundred acres of moorland on the Tweed, near Melrose—moorland bleak and bare—for which he gave £4000. "Cartley Hole" did not sound so well as "Abbotsford": he called it by the latter name, and about 1814 left his residence at Ashestiel for the house of Abbotsford, which he rebuilt. He filled it with costly and curious odds and ends of all sorts; exercised a large hospitality; and endeavoured to revive the aspect of the olden times. Many other purchases of land followed, at heavy prices: fully £20,000 were spent on the mansion and garden. Scott's baronetcy was conferred in 1820. A triumph which culminates in a reception of George the Fourth cannot be a triumph of a highly exalted kind: such was the case with Walter Scott, who took a prominent part in the festivities of the King's visit to Edinburgh in August 1822. But the term of all these brilliancies was at hand. The publishers with whom Scott was so closely connected, Constable and the Ballantynes, were men of talent, but unduly enterprizing: from the first, their undertakings went beyond their capital, and their speculations increased with their perils. Scott was not only a partner with the printer James Ballantyne to the extent of one-third, but also to the same extent with a younger brother, the publisher John Ballantyne: the latter partnership dated from 1808, the former from 1805. The commercial crisis of 1825–6 precipitated, but did not in fact cause, the collapse of these firms: all of them became bankrupt in January of the latter

year. It turned out that Scott was indebted to Constable's creditors, as a partner in the firm of Ballantyne & Co., to the extent of nearly £72,000, about half of which sum was included in the debts of the firm itself. Besides this, there were other liabilities of the partnership, amounting to about £110,000; so that Scott's personal debt reached a total of something like £147,000. That he had been rash is admitted on all hands. He undertook work on a loose and precarious system; having, from or even before the year 1823, contracted to produce novels, and taken payment for them in bills, now become valueless, before so much as fixing on their subject-matter. He showed a bold front to adversity: "Time and I against any two," said he to his creditors. He expressed his confident hope of paying all; surrendered the whole of his property; and executed a trust-deed in favour of certain gentlemen who were to receive the proceeds of his future labours, and to pay off his debts by instalments with interest. He sold his splendid house and furniture, took lodgings, and turned-to once more and doggedly at writing. He expressed to a friend his sense of how hard it was to lose everything, and be poor at last, but said that he hoped yet to retrieve all within a few years.

The works that Scott wrote subsequently to this great reverse, which overtook him at about fifty-five years of age, naturally want buoyancy. They include the *History of Napoleon*, 1827, which had been begun before the wreck of his fortunes; the *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft;* the *Tales of a Grandfather* (episodes of Scottish History), 1827–28; the Scottish History in *Lardner's Cyclopædia;* the notes to his collected works in 1829. His health did not long endure the strain: in February 1830 symptoms of paralysis supervened. A severer stroke of the same malady came in April 1831: still he continued writing many hours a day. His strenuous exertions had practically achieved their purpose: the debts were much

diminished even before the close of his life (he paid six shillings in the pound the year after publishing the *Life of Napoleon*, and had in four years paid £70,000); and the aftersale of his collected works finally wiped them out. The troubles which beset himself personally were aggravated by the aspect of public affairs, then gloomy and ominous enough to so staunch a tory as Scott: yet he was partially cheered by the consciousness of the great progress he was making towards clearing-off his debts, and by the tender affection of his children. In the hope of improving his health, he went abroad, sailing from Portsmouth on the 27th of October 1831. He landed in Naples on the 17th of December, remained there till the 16th of April, and then went on to Rome and other places. Finding his strength decrease, he made haste homewards, starting on the 11th of May. All this while he had continued writing the latest of his long list of romances. Reaching London on the 13th of June, Sir Walter was struck down by a combination of paralysis and apoplexy. The end was visibly approaching. Finally he visited his friend Mr. Laidlaw, the then owner of the house which had witnessed his own signal but unenduring prosperity; he said, "now he knew he was at Abbotsford." He had arrived there on the 11th of July 1832; but he arrived only to die. For fourteen days (after an attack of delirium, in which it was remarked that his mind in its wanderings never strayed to his literary works) he remained in an insensible condition, which closed in death on the 21st of September 1832, about half-past one P.M. The day was warm and beautiful, and all his children were present. On the 26th his remains were buried in the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey.

Scott was the fourth in a family of ten children; of these the only one to leave any descendants was his younger brother Thomas. His own children were his successor in the baronetcy, Sir Walter, Charles, Mrs. Lockhart, and Miss Anne Scott; the two ladies did not survive their father many years. Lady Scott

had died in the thick of her husband's troubles, 15th of May 1827.

The private character of Scott was worthy of all respect; and especially so in his uncommon freedom from literary vanity, his total and resolute avoidance of literary quarrels, and his readiness to encourage and assist deserving or unfriended aspirants. At all periods of his life, his manners were easy and agreeable—the natural result of strong character and sense, and a willingness to enjoy life in its various aspects as he found it, with his great innate insight and genius to fall back upon whenever these were in demand. In youth he was not frivolous or dissipated, nor in manhood and more advanced age indifferent to any healthy, hearty, or manly pleasure of the moment. He often walked some thirty miles in a day, and rode more than a hundred without resting. In all his earlier years he was greatly addicted to field-sports: towards 1812 this taste began to diminish, and he paid some attention to farming, but never took any steady interest in it. He was an early riser, was wont to do his writing-work in the morning, and would then spend the rest of the day with his guests, or otherwise killing time, showing little or nothing of the professional author. His celerity in composition is attested, among innumerable other instances, by his having written the second and third volumes of *Waverley* in the afternoons of three summer weeks of 1814. He finished the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* at the rate of about a canto per week. The *Lord of the Isles* was to a great extent written while the poet was in company: neither conversation nor music caused him any serious disturbance. As in character and habits of life, so in person, Scott was by no means exclusively or predominantly to be identified as a literary man. His face is too well known to demand or bear description: the long, upright forehead, the straitened length of head, the deep-grey eyes. The general aspect is perhaps that of a shrewd farmer, or country-gentleman of moderate estate, rather than

anything else; sagacity, penetration, humour, usage of the world, power and habit of concentrated reflection, are all markedly discernible: but the poet and romancist who flooded all Europe with his vivid and moving conceptions is hardly the personage that one would be prepared to meet in such a countenance.

As regards the merits of Walter Scott as a poet, it is difficult for some critics to be sufficiently affluent of praise, and for others to be sufficiently chary. When one has said that he is exceedingly spirited, one has expressed the most salient and the finest of his excellences; only we must remember that a narrative and romantic poet cannot be thus spirited without having other admirable gifts whence the spirit ensues, and whereby it is sustained—virility, knowledge of life, character, and circumstance, quick sympathy with man and nature, flow of invention, variety of presentment, a heart that vibrates to the noble and the right—much picturesqueness, some beauty. On the other hand, it is not untrue to say that Scott, though continually spirited, is also very frequently tame—and not free from tameness even in his distinctively spirited passages. His phrases, when you pause upon them, are full of commonplace. The reason of this is that Scott was very little of a literary-poetic artist: greatness of expression — the heights and depths of language and of sound — were not much in his way. He respected his subject much more than he respected his art: after consulting and satisfying his own taste and that of his public, the thing had to do well enough. Scott has always been the poet of youthful and high-hearted readers: there seems to be no reason why he should not continue indefinitely to meet their requirements, and certainly they will be considerable losers if ever, in the lapse of time and shifting of poetic models, his compositions should pass out of ready currency. He is not, and never can be, the poet of literary readers: the student and the artist remember him as a cherished

enchantment of their youth, and do not recur to him. Neither the inner recesses of thought nor the high places of art thrill to his appeal. But it is highly possible for the critical tendency and estimate to be too exclusively literary; the poetry of Scott is mainly amenable to a different sort of test, and to that it responds not only adequately but triumphantly.

POETS BORN BETWEEN SCOTT AND COLERIDGE.

JAMES MONTGOMERY.....	1771 to 1854.
JAMES HOGG	1772 to 1835.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

THE youngest of a very numerous family, Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born on the 21st of October 1772, at Ottery St. Mary, in Devonshire. His father became the vicar of this small place, having been Head Master in the King's School; a devout and learned and eminently simple-hearted man, whose extreme absence of mind brought him at times into positions in which a less genuine person would have been ridiculous. His illustrious son was wont in after years to compare him to Parson Adams. By his first wife the Vicar had three daughters, and ten children by his second. Anne Bowdon, the mother of the future poet, was an uneducated but sensible and domestic woman, of a practical turn of mind. It would seem that Samuel inherited much more from his father than from his mother.

The Reverend John Coleridge died before his youngest son was seven years of age; in about two years, the mother followed him to the tomb, and the family was left in straitened circumstances. Samuel was sent to Christ Hospital, London, in 1782: one of his schoolfellows there was Charles Lamb. Mr. Bowyer —a learned and capable flagellant who, instead of enduring a rapid recurrence of committals to the treadmill for brutalities perpetrated upon unhappy boys, was remembered by Coleridge long afterwards with respect tempering the hauntings of fear— was the preceptor in chief. Friendless in London, ill fed, and harshly used, poor little Coleridge could scarcely help being a

melancholy lad, though not wanting in a certain buoyancy of spirits: he joined in no sports, but revelled in books. There are few more curious anecdotes than that which tells us that the forlorn Bluecoat Boy, strolling one day through a crowded London thoroughfare, was thrusting out his arms and hands in an abstracted mood, when his fingers touched a gentleman's waistcoat. Accused on the instant of pocket-picking intentions, he explained that he had been fancying himself Leander in the act of swimming across the Hellespont. Such a response was well calculated to take his questioner aback; the result was that the latter goodnaturedly paid for Coleridge as subscriber to a circulating library, whence the youth drank many a deep draught of bookish delight. Meanwhile he was making very great classical progress: before his fifteenth year he had translated the hymns of Synesius into English anacreontics. He was moreover already deep in metaphysical and theologic controversy. History did not interest him at all, nor even poetry and romance much. He rose to be Deputy Grecian at Christ Hospital, and was selected by the bloodthirsty but discerning Bowyer for a scholarship in Cambridge University.

The book which decisively roused Coleridge's feeling for poetry was one whose title will surprise readers of the present day—the sonnets of the Rev. Mr. Bowles. He had indeed shown a certain versifying tendency before—having written at the early age of eight some lines still preserved for the lettered enquirer. Among his poems of good literary calibre, several also belong to a very youthful period; *Real and Imaginary Time*, for instance, was composed in his sixteenth year. About this latter age he fell in love with the sister of a schoolfellow. It was in boyhood also that he laid the seeds of much future suffering. Imprudent exposure, in swimming and otherwise, brought on a good deal of illness at the age of seventeen to eighteen, and left him a prey to rheumatism ever after.

In February 1791 Coleridge was entered at Jesus College,

Cambridge. He paid no attention to mathematics; nor, even in classics, did he distinguish himself to the extent that might have been anticipated. He obtained a prize for a Greek ode, but did not, after all, take a degree. A debt which he had incurred for college-furniture caused him a deal of trouble: to this, and to his comparative failure as a student, and possibly (as some writers have said) to a disappointment in love, may be attributed the strange impulse on which he acted, in the second year of his university career, in suddenly leaving Cambridge. He came up to London, and wandered desolately about the streets, and next, without more ado, enlisted in the Fifteenth Light Dragoons under the assumed name of Comberback. This occurred on the 3rd of December 1793. Private Comberback was treated with kindness in the troop, but showed (as one might well have guessed) no military aptitude, never getting out of the awkward squad. One day a Cambridge man recognized him in the streets of Reading, where he was quartered. Soon also one of the officers noticed his classical knowledge, elicited his story, and communicated with his friends, who made no delay in procuring his discharge on the 10th of April 1794. Coleridge returned to Jesus College, but not for long. He has left it on record that his course of life while at the University was nearly correct in a moral point of view, although it was his weakness to affect to be more lax than he really was.

Coleridge had now become acquainted with Robert Southey, and was bent upon joining him in a literary course of life. He went off to Bristol, where his friend lived: both of them gave some public lectures on politics. Everybody has heard tell of the project which the two young men schemed out for themselves of what they termed a pantisocracy, or community where all the members should be absolutely equal: it was to be set up at Susquehannah, in America—a place which they pitched upon because its sounding name hit their fancy. But neither Coleridge nor Southey was destined to be a resident at Susque-

hannah, nor yet a pantisocrat—though, after all the many cachinnations with which their not highly practical scheme has been greeted, it may fairly be said that this was not the lowest ideal in which both or either of them indulged. The *coup de grâce* to this speculation came when, in the autumn of 1795, Coleridge married Miss Sarah Fricker, of Bristol; Southey immediately afterwards espoused one of her sisters, and Mr. Lovel, a utopian versifier of their acquaintance, wedded another. With these interests and responsibilities, pantisocracy dissolved its dream-woven fabric, and became a thing to smile and wonder over.

Coleridge remained as yet an ardent lover of liberty, and in many respects a devotee of the principles contended for in the French Revolution—that epoch of glorious hopes, and of great achievements too, which the progress of material well-being and of unheroic common-sense has been making somewhat too dim to us of the waning nineteenth century. The earliest published poem by Coleridge was the drama named *The Fall of Robespierre* —a statesman who was a mere political "bogy" in those days, and one whom an English reader of the newspapers could hardly help supposing much inferior to the patriotic but declamatory band of Girondins whom he had overthrown. Jubilation over the downfall of the "sanguinary monster" was natural to a Coleridge, as well as to a Barras or a Coburg: less natural and less appropriate to the Muse of History after the lapse of more than three quarters of a century. The drama was published with the name of Coleridge alone as author, in the same year as the event, 1794: it appears, however, that the second and third acts are in fact the production of Southey. In the following year this first poetical was succeeded by its author's first prose work, *Conciones ad Populum*, in which also Southey had a hand. Coleridge was now living at Clevedon near Bristol, and soon afterwards he took a cottage at Nether Stowey, at the foot of the Quantock Hills. Here he was close

to a friend, Mr. Poole, who gave him substantial proofs of his kind feeling, and was also near Allfoxden, the residence of Wordsworth, with whom he had about this time become acquainted. The two exalted poets recognized each other's gifts and loftiness of mind, and have left emphatic testimony of the fact; although the cordial friendliness of Coleridge towards Wordsworth was not without some interruption in later years.

In February 1796 the former started a paper of liberal views named the *Watchman*, and made a tour through the northern manufacturing towns, to beat up subscribers. The *Watchman* had to discontinue, at the ninth serial appearance, his vigilance over the public weal. His recurrences were made with a lack of punctuality deplorable in so alert an official, and the opinions which he emitted were not exactly what his few and rapidly fewer subscribers had been expecting. The editor's attitude of mind towards public questions was shifting fast: and what began with a change of circumstance ended in a settled divergency—a change of opinion, and even of sentiment. Coleridge was still indeed anti-ministerial in British politics; but, after the French invasion of Switzerland, he became bitterly anti-Gallican and anti-Jacobin. Practically, with whatever qualifications and saving-clauses of intellectual continuity, the pantisocrat developed into a tory. As in the case of Wordsworth, it would be equally needless and unfair, at this distance of time, to denounce Coleridge as a turncoat, or ascribe his altered tone of mind to any moral obliquity; he never made toryism pay to any extent worth mentioning, as did Southey, his associate in zenith and nadir of opinion: nor did he, like that distinguished panegyrist of Wat Tyler and of George the Third, exhibit the personal spites of a rancorous renegade. This change of political opinion in Coleridge was gradually, though more slowly, accompanied by a similar change of religious opinion. In his schoolboy days he had dallied with scepticism, which the bully Bowyer chastised with the

only available weapon in his armoury, the rod. He grew up, however, a sincere adherent to biblical faith, but a unitarian—or (as he himself says) a "psilanthropist," or believer in the merely natural manhood of Jesus. While living at Stowey he frequently preached in the unitarian chapel in the neighbouring town of Taunton, and attracted large congregations by his gifts of surpassing oratory and ever-welling fluency—gifts by which we must always remember that he was distinguished among his contemporaries in a most peculiar degree, and fully as much as by the thought or beauty of his published writings, whether in poetry or in prose. But unitarianism was not to remain his spiritual tabernacle to the end. Towards the close of 1796 he engaged deeply and seriously in religious speculations; and, as time wore on, unitarianism became more and more barren and repulsive to him, and one final flash of conviction turned him into a trinitarian, not only sincere but impassioned in the faith. Thenceforth, without setting himself to speak in an uncharitable spirit of his opponents, Coleridge ceased to regard as any genuine christianity at all that form of christianity which is without belief in Christ as God. It is not altogether easy—not at any rate for those who approach the subject without holding the touchstone of the like form of faith—to enter into the workings of Coleridge's mind on this subject; to understand what it was that convinced him, or what was in fact the persuasion into which he was convinced, taken in its esoteric as well as its exoteric relations—for unquestionably the esoteric counted for a good deal. A memorandum written in February 1805 shows that he had been emerging from unitarianism seven or eight years earlier, and that the doctrine of the Trinity had now at last "burst upon him at once as an awful truth:—No Christ, no God." He adds: "Oh that this conviction may work upon me and in me, and that my mind may be made up, as to the character of Jesus and of historical christianity, as clearly as it is of the Logos, and intel-

lectual or spiritual christianity—that I may be made to know either their special and peculiar union, or their absolute disunion in any peculiar sense!" The most obvious result of Coleridge's trinitarian conversion is a flood of eloquence and verbiage about "the Logos"; and perhaps its most persistently operative effect upon the unillumined reader is to make him glance rapidly over the page of prose to see whether that word appears upon it, and to turn the leaf decisively when he perceives that it does—which it does very often.

But I have been anticipating somewhat, and must revert to Coleridge's literary doings at Nether Stowey. He used for a while, with a view to eking out a subsistence, to write verses for money in a London journal; and in 1796 he published a volume, consisting mostly of his earlier poems, intermixed with others composed by Lamb. Of this volume a second edition appeared in 1797, with some added verses by Mr. Charles Lloyd, the translator of Alfieri. This year, 1797, was the great epoch of Coleridge's poetic fertility: the works by which he will be longest and always remembered were the production of a young man of twenty-five, a little less or a little more—a point which readers are apt to forget, and to re-learn with surprise. Indeed, during the three years of his sojourn at Nether Stowey he composed most of his leading poems, though published at a later date. The *Ancient Mariner* was the work of 1797; also the first part of *Christabel* (the second part belongs to 1800), and the drama of *Remorse*, termed in the first instance *Osorio*. *Zapolya* was a much later dramatic work, written between 1814 and 1816, and published in 1817: a hasty performance which received a fair share of popularity. The plan of the volume named *Lyrical Ballads*, so famous in the critical contests of that time, was now formed in consequence of conversations between Coleridge and Wordsworth; the *Ancient Mariner* appeared in this volume, published in 1798. In the memoir of Wordsworth I have already given the important remarks made

by Coleridge regarding the *Lyrical Ballads*, and his own share in them: a good deal more, bearing on the same matter, will be found in the preface written by Wordsworth to the volume; we have also seen that the name of "Lake Poets" was applied to the two authors of this book, soon after its appearance, and also to Southey.

In 1798, the year of the publication of this celebrated joint volume, Coleridge, through the liberality of the distinguished china-manufacturers Josiah and Thomas Wedgewood, was enabled to visit Germany, with a view to deeper and completer educational studies. He sailed on the 16th of September, in company with Wordsworth, and the sister of that poet; and he remained abroad for rather more than a year, returning to London at the end of November 1799. At Göttingen he attended Blumenbach's lectures on physics and natural history, and studied, through the medium of notes made by a young German, Eichhorn's lectures on the New Testament. He also took lessons from Professor Tychsen in the Gothic of Ulphilas, and went through a complete course of German literature. With the later German metaphysics he did not form an acquaintance until some years afterwards.

On first coming back to England, he stayed in London (Buckingham Street, Strand), and devoted himself to the translating of Schiller's drama of *Wallenstein*—an arrangement having been made for publishing the English version at the same date with the German original. He completed his work in the very moderate space of six weeks, and issued it from the press in 1800: it had scarcely any sale. He next undertook the literary and political departments of the *Morning Post*, stipulating that he should be at liberty to perform his work without favour, and without deviation from a definite line of principle. Afterwards, from about 1803, he began writing in the *Courier*, and this employment continued till 1814. In 1801 he had settled at Keswick in Cumberland: Southey was already a

resident there, and Wordsworth was not far off, at Grasmere. But the damp climate did not suit Coleridge's health, and in 1804 he availed himself of an opportunity of going to Malta, on a visit to his friend Dr. Stoddart. Almost immediately on his arrival in the island, an oppression of breathing came on, and continued to affect his health for the residue of his life. From May 1804 till the summer of 1805 he acted as Secretary *ad interim* to the Governor of Malta, Sir Alexander Ball—a distinguished naval officer, of whose character Coleridge has left in the pages of *The Friend* a very high eulogium. His salary as Secretary was no doubt the highest rate of remuneration he ever received in his life for any kind of service to the world, £800 per annum. Neither the *Ancient Mariner* nor the "Logos" counted for nearly so much to Coleridge. On the arrival of the new Secretary, the poet quitted Malta on the 27th of September 1805, and went to Syracuse; next through Naples to Rome, where he remained for some months. Here he met Washington Alston, the American painter, whom he valued, and who painted a likeness of the poet. Coleridge at last had to leave Rome hurriedly, having received a hint that Napoleon, then the Briareus of the entire continent, meant to arrest him: the "Corsican ogre," we are told, attributed to the author's articles in the *Morning Post* the feelings of jealousy and indignation which had caused the rupture of the peace of Amiens. The story has rather an apocryphal air; but it is narrated in good faith, and to disbelieve would not be to disprove it. Coleridge returned to England from Leghorn in an American ship in 1806. A French vessel gave chase; and the American captain compelled him to throw overboard all his papers—a serious loss to himself and to readers, as among these papers were many notes upon the antiquities and other matters of interest in Rome.

Keswick was now once more the home of Coleridge, though he was oftener staying with Wordsworth at Grasmere. Here

he planned *The Friend*—a periodical publication, the 1st Number of which appeared on the 8th of June 1809, and the 27th and last on the 15th of March 1810. He was his own publisher, and naturally lost money, being as far as possible from an adept in matters of business. Wordsworth gave some coöperation in the writing of *The Friend*, which, in its re-edited form issued in 1818, was so considerably altered as almost to constitute a new work. In 1810 Coleridge left the Lake district, and did not again return to live there; his wife and family remained behind. The poet may possibly have seen them at some subsequent date, but was never more domesticated with them. This has of course been charged against him as a grave misdoing; he was still a youngish man, thirty-eight years of age, but I do not find it recorded that, beyond the act of ceasing to cohabit with his wife, he gave any cause of scandal. The vessels of wrath which were afterwards, under somewhat similar circumstances, poured forth upon the atheist Shelley and the sceptic Byron, might therefore, with some show of fairness, be considerably diluted for the grizzling head of the christian and orthodox Coleridge. Still it was a transgression requiring explanation, if not expiation. Apologists have pleaded that the poet did not, in any complete sense of the term, "desert" his wife, but gave her all his little income, and lived on the meagre profits of his pen. He had also had the providence to insure his life in the year 1803.

He came to London, where he had already, in 1808, delivered a course of lectures, on poetry and the fine arts, at the Royal Institution. At first he lived with his friend, the barrister Basil Montagu; afterwards at Hammersmith with another acquaintance, Mr. Morgan. He now delivered, at the London Philosophical Society, another course of lectures on Shakespeare and Milton, beginning in November 1811, followed by a further course at the Royal Institution. His great reputation as a critic of æsthetics and poetry is to a large extent founded upon these

several sets of lectures, and upon his written recastings of their purport. He spoke from notes, but frequently, and at considerable length, launched out into extempore discourse. His action, even when he declaimed energetically, was subdued. Now also, 1813, after a long interval of years, the drama of *Remorse*, written as far back as 1797, obtained, through the good offices of Lord Byron, a hearing on the boards of Drury Lane, and met with a fairly encouraging amount of public acceptance. Soon after this event Coleridge lived for a while at Calne, in Somersetshire. Here he collected the volume of poems entitled *Sibylline Leaves*, wrote most of his *Biographia Literaria*, and dictated *Zapolya:* this drama also was offered to Drury Lane, but declined.

We now come to the last migration of Coleridge's somewhat nomadic though not eventful life. For years he had been addicted to dosing himself with opium and laudanum. He began the insidious practice, it seems, in consequence of seeing a medical notification of the curative effects of Kendal's Black Drop in a case of rheumatism and palpitation of the heart, both of which diseases afflicted himself. He procured the drug, and its medicinal virtue appeared at first almost magical. Another statement, not perhaps entirely baseless, and given as on his own authority, is that he took opium "to deaden the sharpness of his cogitations": there seems to be no good ground for charging him with having used it for the mere gratification of a morbid appetite. Anyhow he was now a helpless and a restive slave to the habit: this had grown upon him, he had struggled with it, had succumbed, and could not, with all his feeble and half-hearted efforts, throw it off. In consequence of this state of things, Dr. Joseph Adams, on the poet's behalf, asked Mr. Gillman, a surgeon residing at Highgate, in April 1816, whether he could make it convenient to receive Coleridge as an inmate of his house, with a view to breaking him of the destructive and now abhorred practice. Mr. Gillman consented. Coleridge,

whom he had never seen before, arrived on the 12th at the pleasant and hospitable house in Highgate: he settled down there, and left it no more 'till death. His stipulation was that he should pay his own expenses. He said that he had never, since he began taking laudanum, gone for sixty consecutive hours without it. But severe precautions on Mr. Gillman's part, aided by self-command as strenuous as the poet was capable of, succeeded: Coleridge ceased to be an opium-eater. At Highgate he cultivated his flowers, and had a set of birds as pensioners. He was not apparently sad, though there are ample evidences in his writings of deep-seated dissatisfaction with himself, and with the comparatively slight life-long results of his spacious, splendid, and various intellect. Not indeed that the bulk of his published writings is, properly speaking, insignificant, nor their fabric flimsy: but he was mournfully conscious of projects lapsed, energies waning, and opportunities lost, never to recur. His extraordinary powers of conversation, or rather monologue or holding-forth, now found ample exercise: there were many, and some half-worshiping, listeners to the oracular and superabundant utterances, which flowed on for hours. "The moaning sing-song of that theosophico-metaphysical monotony left on you, at last, a very dreary feeling," says Carlyle, who has given (in his *Life of Sterling*) an incomparable record of these outpourings. There are other records much more admiring, and some perhaps not less true in the main; but they run no chance of surviving in the popular memory against Carlyle's. The two volumes which have been published of *Coleridge's Table-talk* are said to give but a very insufficient idea of the reality.

The period of Coleridge's chief studies in German metaphysics began about the time of his settling in London: in his earlier life he had been a disciple of Hartley's theories, and named his eldest son after that writer. An expert has pronounced that he adopted the method and terminology of the

Teutonic philosophers, rather than developed any system. His avowed ambition was to overthrow the ascendency of Locke and Paley; but it cannot be said that he in any way achieved this. In psychology he adhered to Schelling's hypothesis of The Absolute: he advocated without much advancing it. The twelfth chapter of his *Biographia Literaria*, which comes nearer than any other of his writings to being a full statement of his views, is indeed little more than a translation from Schelling. He sturdily opposed the Utilitarians, then rising into prominence, and was an upholder of the doctrine of a moral sense. Not only in matters of speculation, but in poetry as well, Coleridge has been assailed as an unmeasured and disingenuous borrower. That there is some truth in these charges has been determined upon evidence too clear for refutation: but one is not bound to adopt or to urge them with any animus. Coleridge was a man of very wide reading and susceptible intellect: opinions or conceptions with which he found himself in sympathy rapidly took possession of and pervaded his mind, and he reproduced them, coloured more or less by his own genius, without its being permitted to us to call that genius in question, even if its receptivity was excessive. Some suspicion of plagiarism might again be founded upon passages in Coleridge's Lectures on Shakespeare resembling observations made by Schlegel: it appears, however, that in fact the English lecturer had preceded the German by about two years.

The First and Second Parts of *Christabel* were now for the first time printed. Mr. Gillman has left us an account of the course which the story, as narrated by Coleridge to his friends, was intended to take. Geraldine was conceived as a creature "not of this world," and veritably of "hideous form." After a while, she was to transmute herself into the aspect of Christabel's absent lover, and was to resume the courtship of that noble young damsel; and Christabel, though haunted by some uneasy forebodings, was to be on the point of marrying the seeming

warrior, when the real original lover was to make his re-appearance, to the discomfiture and evanishing of the fiendish Geraldine. This does not look like a very effective conclusion to a tale so potent over the imagination, in its inception, as *Christabel*. Perhaps Mr. Gillman, whose reference to the matter is not distinguished by much delicacy of artistic insight, has given but a blurred version of Coleridge's conception; or possibly Coleridge himself, more than sufficiently plagued by people who wanted to know how *Christabel* "was to end," put them off with a slovenly account of the scheme. Other works of the author's later years were the *Two Lay Sermons*, writt in 1816; the *Aids to Reflection*, 1825; the essay *On the C stitution of Church and State, according to the Idea of each*, 183 The *Theory of Life* was a posthumous publication, not issu till 1849. He contemplated writing, as the crowning work his literary life, a book on christianity as the sole revelation permanent and universal validity; and had planned, ever sinc the age of twenty-five, an epic on the Destruction of Jerusalem, which he considered the only thoroughly epic subject as yet unappropriated: it need hardly be said, however, that neither of these formidable projects ever took actual shape.

The year 1819 was unfortunate to Coleridge: his publish became bankrupt, and the poet's pecuniary position, always la and uncertain, now sank into a dependence which weighed muc on his spirits. He thought of becoming a systematic contribut to *Blackwood's Magazine*, being acquainted with the conducto of that rather venomous organ of toryism; and he did publis there No. 1 of a *Selection from Mr. Coleridge's Literary Co respondence* (October 1821): but No. 2 or any farther success of No. 1 never appeared. In 1825 the Royal Society Literature, recently incorporated by George the Fourth, w dignified by numbering Coleridge as one of its ten "Roy Associates," and he thus became the recipient of an annu £105 from the king's private purse: one of the not too numero

good deeds which one is glad to remember to the credit of "the First Gentleman in Europe." At the accession of "the sailor king," William the Fourth, this meagre but welcome dole, well earned and no doubt gratefully received, came to an end.

Thus glided away the lengthening, lingering twilight of Coleridge's days; glided calmly, and somewhat lethargically, yet not without active intellectual life at the centre. Many ysical sufferings heralded the close; caused eventually by an anic change slowly taking place in the structure of the heart. ghtmare also often troubled him, along with other ailments hich had beset him from his early youth and manhood. Four ars of confinement to a sick-room came to an end on the 25th July 1834. The poet's remains lie in the churchyard of ghgate.

Perhaps the thing that strikes one most in Coleridge's osyncrasy and career is what would be called "want of cha-cter." It looks as if he had not been born with any very ecided bent towards any development other than intellectual; nd, even in the intellectual region, he works with small force of ersonality. As to the ordinary aims or interests of life, he ired little to attain, and less to strive. In a certain sense he as slothful and imprudent: not, however, that he was at any ne properly an idle man, nor long unoccupied,—he even had ong and continuous powers of application. But he had not e habit of business-like working, on a systematic plan and for jects which other people concurred with himself in regarding practical. His desire of truth was earnest, and at first asso-ated with tolerance towards opponents. In his later years, wever, he was somewhat harsh in his judgments, and erulous on his own account, which may to a considerable tent be attributed to ill health. His opinions, not over-stable themselves, were always preached with emphasis. Though e hardly forms such a conception of him, it is attested that had ample gifts of wit, and even of humour, and was a

distinguished punster. He possessed in an eminent degree the power of attaching friends; along with personal humility, gentleness, and courtesy, a strong sense of gratitude, and marked candour in the confession of his shortcomings. All the social affections were known to him, abnormal though his conduct was in living apart from his family throughout the latter half of his manhood. In person one is compelled to say that few illustrious men look less interesting than Coleridge in the ordinary portrai (except the sketch by Maclise): there is no *resistance* in his fa —nothing which tells out as a rallying-point of character himself, or for our encouragement. He was himself fully ali to this. A letter of his dated 6th August 1814 (I am not awa that it has ever been published) says, with regard to the portr painted by Alston, "I am not mortified, though I own I shou like it better to be otherwise, that my face is not a manly representable face. Whatever is impressive is part fugiti part existent only in the imaginations of persons impresse strongly by my conversation. The face itself is a feeble, un manly face. The exceeding weakness, strengthlessness, in my face, was even painful to me." We are fain to recede from the portraits, and take refuge in the fearfully hackneyed quotatio from Wordsworth,—

"A noticeable man with large grey eyes."

Coleridge was about 5 feet 9½ inches in height, but looke shorter. His hair was in youth black and glossy, but was whi at or before the age of fifty; his complexion fair; his sha bulky and loose. In advanced years he was a great snuff-take but always scrupulous in cleanliness.

Of Coleridge's work in literature, other than that which to the form of poetry, I shall attempt no estimate here. A regards his poetry, let me first of all quote something of wh Mr. Swinburne has said. "As a poet, his place is indisputable it is high among the highest of all time. An age that shou

forget or neglect him might neglect or forget any poet that ever lived. At least, any poet whom it did remember such an age would remember as something other than a poet: it would prize and praise in him, not the absolute and distinctive quality, but something empirical or accidental. That may be said of this one which can hardly be said of any but the greatest among men—that, come what may to the world in course of time, it will never see his place filled. Other and stronger men, with fuller control and concentration of genius, may do more service, may bear more fruit: but such as his they will not have in them to give. The highest lyric work is either passionate or imaginative. Of passion Coleridge's has nothing; but, for height and perfection of imaginative quality, he is the greatest of lyric poets. his was his special power, and this is his special praise."

I have extracted the preceding passage because it expresses, ith more authority than I could confer on it, what I feel to be he substantial truth about Coleridge; and especially because t expresses this with more genuine *enthusiasm* than is at my command. The tribute to so true and fine a poet, so great a benefactor of so many lovers of poesy, should be paid with est and exuberance; while, for myself, I confess that my per- eption of the excellences of Coleridge's poetic work exceeds, n the whole, my individual delight in it. No one who is at l qualified to entertain or express an opinion on the subject n be insensible to the exquisite beauties of such a lyric as *outh and Age*, or some others which might be named along th it. But (not to speak of his dramas, confessedly not of st-rate merit) his most important and famous works appear to e to suffer from a want of central good-sense—which one may ssibly refuse to care much about, in comparison with their alted beauties of execution, but which does nevertheless serve to be seriously taken into account if it impresses one all as a fact. That tenuity of mental substance should be e defect of works produced by so rich a mind as Coleridge's

may appear unlikely or strange: perhaps tenuity of *character*, a want of grasp of realities in life as realities, is the true secret. Let us for a moment consider his three most renowned works; which (omitting the short narrative poem of *Love*) are *The Ancient Mariner*, *Kubla Khan*, and *Christabel*. The *Ancient Mariner* is a most striking and thrilling invention, considered as a picture; but, considered as a train of causes and effects in the poetic domain (to say nothing of the facts of Nature), it seems to me essentially meagre—defective in the core of common sense. The informing idea of the poem is to inculcate a love of all the works of creation, especially all living beings: and how is this enforced? By showing us the fearful life-long doom inflicted by divine agency or permission upon one man for the wanton and cruel, but comparatively irreflective, act of shooti an albatross (this incident, it is right to note, was suggested Coleridge by Wordsworth, who remembered it from the writin of Shelvocke the circumnavigator); and further showing th death of an entire ship's crew, to atone for their having supe stitiously supposed, on cause shown to their dim understandings that the destruction of the albatross was approvable. If thi is the love of living beings, or the relative appraisement of on sea-bird and many men, we might be fain to retrace our ste to the ancestral quasi-gorilla or other anthropoid. The secon poem of the three, *Kubla Khan*, is an ecstasy of sound, a cannot be too closely treasured on that score: but, when consider that it is avowedly the inconsecutive word-work o dream, we must allow that it does not claim to be confron with compositions in which meaning is a prime ingredie *Christabel*, if anybody doubts its wealth of significance, c plead that it is but a fragment, and that any such doubt therefore unfair. This may or may not be a complete ans to objections: if it *is* a complete answer, one is still entitled say that a poet who set full and adequate value on the mean of his poems would have been scarce likely to leave such

work fragmentary during the thirty-four years of life which remained to him after writing its Second Part. Thus also *The Three Graves*, which may be even preferred to all Coleridge's other work in point of living strength and interest, the precious power of "coming home" to the reader, is again left a mere fragment.

But after all it is an ungracious task to haggle over the gratitude due from men living and to come to the author of *The Ancient Mariner*. He too has given us marvellous and imperishable gifts: let us accept them, prize them, honour him, and be thankful.

POETS BORN BETWEEN COLERIDGE AND CAMPBELL.

MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS	1773 to 1818.
ROBERT SOUTHEY	1774 to 1843.
CHARLES LAMB	1775 to 1834.
JAMES SMITH	1775 to 1839.
WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR	1775 to 1864.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

A MILD and moonlike lustre surrounds the name of Campbell. He is like one of those holy personages whom the painter, in the later ages of Italian or christian art, represents with a faint lumour round the head, in the company of Saints of a more illustrious order who have a full-circleted glory, while the Madonna or other protagonist is endowed with a cruciform nimbus on a complete scale. The question arises in the artist's and the spectator's mind whether it were wiser to define this holy personage by that lowest symptom of sainthood, or rather to merge him in the mass of men to whom no occipital glimmer appertains. Even to himself, could he answer the question articulately, might it not be more congenial to remain undistinguished than thus to be distinguished by the minimum of outward beatitude? The painter is in half a mind to rub out the lumour round his head: but at last he determines the question on grounds of strict and accurate right. This personage is entitled to his lumour: Simeon, Joachim, Zacharias, or what not, he has a right to the distinctive sign, and must not be despoiled of it. And so with Campbell. Any reader who should deny him the name of poet, and the aureole of poesy, would do an injustice; but one may heedfully discriminate as to which of his various compositions have rightly earned him his eminence, and may demur to rating the eminence, in any instance, higher than its demonstrable value.

Thomas Campbell came of an honourable stock in Argyll-

shire, his paternal grandfather having been a Highland laird, "Campbell of Kervan." The father of the poet was the youngest son of this laird: he had carried on a large mercantile business in Glasgow, but had retired from commerce, far from wealthy, before Thomas's birth. Thomas again was the youngest son of this youngest son—last in a family of ten; and did not come into the world until his father had already attained the rather advanced age of sixty-seven. Under such circumstances he was sure to be a favourite. He was born in Glasgow on the 27th of July 1777.

At the age of twelve he was entered in Glasgow University, and remained there six years. Though he gained a bursary for Latin in his first session, and acted as a private tutor, he does not appear to have been in any very special degree industrious or proficient: but he was noticed for the merit of occasional exercises—one of these productions, a translation from the *Clouds* of Aristophanes (presumably in verse), being pronounced by the master, Professor Young, to be the best exercise ever given in in the University. About the same time Campbell executed the translations from Sophocles, Tyrtæus, and other Greek poets, that are included among his published works. At a later date, upon his visiting Germany in the twenty-third year of his age, he resumed the systematic study of Greek, giving several months' close application to it under Professor Heyne. After leaving Glasgow University, he lived for a year in his ancestral county of Argyll, and within this period wrote the verses named *Love and Madness*, with some others. A rock in the Island of Mull has retained, from his frequenting it, the name of "The Poet's Seat." A certain degree of local repu now already attached to Campbell—sufficient to be taken in account by himself in pondering his future prospects. resolved at last to abandon or defer the idea which he hitherto entertained of joining the legal profession, and pursue a more extended course of study in Edinburgh Uni-

versity. Hither accordingly he came in his nineteenth year, continued his collegiate career, and enlarged his circle of acquaintance and of observation. He soon got to know Dugald Stewart, and James Grahame (author of *The Sabbath*), with Jeffrey, Brougham, and other young men destined to distinction.

Now came the great event of Campbell's life. In April 1799, when he was still residing in Edinburgh, and only a few months after he had attained his legal majority, he published in that capital *The Pleasures of Hope*. If a person who had never been apprized that the *Pleasures of Hope* is a celebrated poem were to take it up at the present day, to look into it without prepossession, and to read it through (which latter is a rather uncertain contingency), he would probably be astonished to learn, at the close of the perusal, that this work made its author at once greatly and widely famous. Seldom, indeed, has a first poem produced so great and so permanent a sensation, and constituted so large a portion of its writer's sum-total of work and of reputation. The primary wonder is that people should have read at all a poem of so vague, speculative, and academic a theme and title: *The Pleasures of Virtue*, or *The Charms of Wisdom*, might seem almost as attractive to a reader of the present day, but would certainly not command a large *clientèle*. On this point, we have to consider that the taste of 1799 differed perceptibly from our own, and that Rogers's poem *The Pleasures of Memory* was already a work of repute; and the *Pleasures of Hope* was no doubt felt by the public, and intended by its author, to have a kind of supplementary or competitive relation to the work of Rogers. It seems to me manifest that the earlier of the two poems had by far the better poetical subject-matter. Memory is a special and distinct faculty of the mind, and has as its object actual events of the past. Thus the *Pleasures of Memory* had a tangible and positive basis, capable of a narrative or any other coherent treatment, and potentially coextensive (or nearly so) with human life and experience.

The *Pleasures of Hope* present a very different aspect. Hope is simply an emotion or spiritual condition which any one of us may get into, and again get out of, twenty times a day without its making much difference to anybody. The very words "The Pleasures of Hope" carry with them a fatal sound of diffusion, casualty, sentiment, and rhetoric: there is nothing structural or organic about them. If we heard a zoölogist talk about "the aspects of the animal kingdom," we should not expect to receive from him any very precise additions to our knowledge of morphology; nor does a poet who writes of "the pleasures of Hope" promise any large increase to our sympathetic insight into the human soul. A second wonder connected with Campbell's work still remains—namely, that people who ventured to read a poem named *The Pleasures of Hope* by an unknown writer should have been so deeply and generously sensible to its merits of treatment—consisting (as these may now be thought to do) of careful execution equably efficient for the most part, and from time to time undeniably felicitous, and of a well-poised balance between thought and expression, neither overweighting the other, rather than of anything that can be called powerful or moving—far less, startling or enchaining. But such was the fact. The poem produced a great impression; the "Modern Athens" stamped it with her prompt and emphatic approval; its fame spread over the country; and Campbell, at the age of twenty-one, found himself a man not only suddenly but permanently renowned—marked out by his first volume as a poet from whom great things had already come, and must continue to come. And I think it cannot be denied that the repute of the *Pleasures of Hope* was a powerful constituent in the admiration accorded to whatever Campbell produced in after years: without so great a celebrity, acquired beforehand and still subsisting, the later works would have had an indefinitely narrowed chance of warm public acceptance.

The *Pleasures of Hope* went through four editions within its

first year. The original purchase-money of the MS. had been the modest sum of £10; but profits began to accrue from the work to Campbell at a very early date, and were sufficient to enable him to go to the Continent, which he resolved to do in the following year, 1800. He visited parts of Germany; and, on the 3rd of December in that year, obtained, from the monastery of St. James, a distant view of the battle of Hohenlinden, gained by Moreau and the French over the Austrians, and furnishing the subject of one of Campbell's most renowned compositions. This poem was first published in 1802, in a new edition—the seventh—of the *Pleasures of Hope*. From Germany Campbell had intended to pass into Italy; but this, in the disturbed state of Europe at that time, was not permitted him, and, nothing loth at bringing at last his disquietudes and hankerings to a close, he returned homewards by Hamburg and Altona. At the former place, where he resided some weeks, he wrote "Ye Mariners of England," in the prospect of war with Denmark; and at the latter place *The Exile of Erin*. This poem gave some umbrage to the authorities of his native country; and on his re-settling in Edinburgh, somebody chose to suspect him of being a spy, and he was subjected to an examination. He now stayed in the Scottish capital for more than a year, mixing in literary society. In 1803 he migrated to the world of London, making his home in Sydenham. Here he remained, with little interruption, for about twenty years; at a later date, he was domiciled in Middle Scotland Yard. *Lochiel's Warning* had been composed in Edinburgh: a poem of small dimensions, such as would not need to be recorded in the case of another writer, for the purposes of a notice like the present: but with Campbell, a poet of long elaboration and no profusion, every short production counts, if it can be considered up to the higher level of his work. In the autumn of 1803 he married his cousin, Miss Matilda Sinclair; and from about this period he may be regarded as having entered definitely and decisively upon the profession of literature as his sole career.

Unadventurous from the first, the life of Campbell becomes still more ordinary as we proceed; and, strictly regulated from the beginning, his poetry grows yet more conscious of, and contented with, the curb. Critics have a habit of 'calling certain sorts of work "chaste"; not as indicating any quality of moral continence, but as implying the correctest and purest taste, unmixed with any license or audacity. The safest thing that a reader of only the usual powers of endurance can do with a poem docketed as "chaste" is to leave it alone. The *Pleasures of Hope* was preëminently (and not undeservedly) "chaste" in the eyes of its reviewers and admirers: if that composition was chaste, the Muse of the next considerable poetic product of its author, *Gertrude of Wyoming*, demands from our vocabulary some stronger—or rather some more markedly mild—epithet; she might be termed "spinster-like." Though the story of this poem is not absolutely destitute of stormy incidents, excitement is the very last boon which the well-judging reader will seek from its pages; rather a faint and curdling current of pleasure, a hesitating suggestion of emotional interest which the reader encourages with complacency, and almost thinks he has succeeded in warming into a sort of glow—it is so obvious, from the high-paced commendations of two generations of critics and readers, that he ought to do this. Circumstances are not wholly in his favour; but if, at the last stanza of *Gertrude of Wyoming*, he finds that he has managed to "keep up the circulation," he rightly considers himself successful—like a man who attains the same end by walking onward on a wretchedly cold day. To get heat out of such an atmosphere is impossible; but you can resist the influences of the temperature, determine not to be beaten by it, and finish your course through it with joy.

Gertrude of Wyoming was published in 1809, along with *Lord Ullin's Daughter* and *The Battle of the Baltic: O'Connor's Child* appeared in a later edition of the same volume. The work of

the intervening decade (from 1799, when the *Pleasures of Hope* came out) had been chiefly in the way of prose composition or compilation. In 1807, three volumes put together by Campbell, *Annals of Great Britain, from the Accession of George the Third to the Peace of Amiens*, were issued anonymously in Edinburgh; and about the same period, several articles in the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*. Already, in 1806, a pension of £200 per annum had been conferred upon "the Bard of Hope" by the Fox ministry: this he continued to enjoy up to his death. After the publication of *Gertrude of Wyoming*, no less than fifteen years elapsed within which Campbell brought out nothing of any length in poetry. In 1818 he returned to Germany, and visited Paris: here he is recorded to have shown intense enjoyment of the works of sculpture and painting in the Louvre. In the year after re-settling in England, he published *Specimens of the British Poets* (7 volumes): this selection was reprinted in 1841, in a single volume, with an introductory essay on English Poetry by Campbell, and notes by Mr. Peter Cunningham. The first publication of the *Specimens* was followed, in the ensuing year, by the poet's appearance as a lecturer. Two years before this, Hazlitt (coming after Coleridge, as we have already seen) had discoursed on English Poetry at the Surrey (or London Philosophical) Institution: now Campbell succeeded Hazlitt at the same place, and lecturing on the same subject. These addresses confirmed his reputation as an elegant and attractive critic of poetry: they were repeated in various localities, and produced a handsome profit. In 1820 he became editor of the *New Monthly Magazine*, and retained this post up to 1831. The value of his name was recognized by a good salary (stated to have been £600 per annum), covering his own literary contributions as well as his editorial oversight. The latter was in fact mainly nominal: but there was a working editor, Mr. Cyrus Redding, whose services proved as substantial as those of Campbell were perfunctory. At any rate,

the magazine flourished during and by virtue of its connexion with so distinguished a man, attaining a position far in advance of any it had previously realized. When at length he terminated the engagement, he started a periodical of his own, *The Metropolitan Magazine:* this, however, soon passed out of his hands, and Campbell's editorial career was over—never a successful one, in the right sense of the term.

Theodric appeared in 1824. Its very name is now well-nigh forgotten, and I suppose there are extremely few living readers who know what it is about. Of these verses we may say with Dante "Non ragioniam di lor." Perhaps we cannot base this decision on precisely the same ground which the Florentine assigns, that "mai non fur vivi": but

"Fama di loro il mondo esser non lassa"

is strictly apposite, and the reason why they are

"A Dio spiacenti ed ai nimici sui"

is the same which Horace long ago assigned—

"Mediocribus esse poetis
Non Di, non homines, non concessere columnæ."

Another unalluring poem, *The Pilgrim of Glencoe*, came out in 1842, and is the last that remains to be specified.

Within the period of his editorship of the *New Monthly*, Campbell's mind was greatly occupied with the liberation of Greece from the Turks, and with the attempts at reviving the Polish nationality: he was indeed very earnest in any object that he took to heart. His enthusiasm for Poland was of old standing, as readers of the *Pleasures of Hope* are well aware; an honest, enduring, and generous enthusiasm, which took practical shape in the founding of the London Association of Friends of Poland, which often made him touchy if he was thwarted or opposed in it, and which we can remember with perhaps as much pleasure as any personal trait that has to be

recorded of the poet. It has indeed been said that he was a thorough republican at heart; but, in Great Britain, "thorough republicans" are wont to be partial aristocrats, and Campbell was at least that much. Another scheme which interested him extremely, and which in fact he claimed to have originated, was the foundation of the London University; it is certain, however, that at any rate the actual execution of this project was due to others—men who, as Campbell thought and said with some soreness, arrogated to themselves the credit which was mostly due to him. Another scheme of his, towards 1831, was the establishment of a Literary Club, or society for encouraging literature. In this he was baulked, and he attributed the disappointment to a combination of publishers. Hence some of his taunts against the bibliopoles. He would profess to admire Napoleon—"he had hanged a publisher." In 1827 he was elected Lord Rector of the place of his own education, Glasgow University: he defeated no less a rival than Sir Walter Scott, was honoured with re-election in the two following years, and honourably distinguished himself from recent precursors by heedful discharge of the duties of the office.

In 1830 Campbell had the sorrow of losing his wife: she left him one son, who survived both parents. The widower paid a visit to Algiers in 1832, and wrote a set of papers on that region, published in the *Metropolitan Magazine*, and re-printed in 2 volumes, in 1837, under the title of *Letters from the South*. Other publications of his later years did nothing to enlarge or confirm his reputation. There was a *Life of Mrs. Siddons*, brought out in 1834; a slovenly performance, chiefly written, it would appear, by some other person, and decorated with Campbell's name for the attraction of the gullible. A *Life of Sir Thomas Lawrence* had a similar origin: another biography —that of Frederick the Great, 1841 to 1843—was avowedly no more than edited by the poet. There was besides a *Life of Petrarch*, 1841. All this sort of hack-work (which might, how-

ever, have been something other than hack-work, had he chosen to do it better) was distasteful to Campbell, who professed to care for none but poetic celebrity. In the summer of 1843, having now attained sixty-six years of age, he retired to Boulogne; and here he died on the 15th of June 1844. On the 3rd of July in the same year his body was buried in Westminster Abbey, near the centre of Poets' Corner, close to the remains of Addison—no inappropriate neighbour.

The admirers of Campbell are powerful and numerous enough, his fame is sufficiently established and diffused, to make some words of dissent or demur excusable: nobody will much regard them, and the dissentient will be far more likely to lower himself than the poet in general estimation. To me Campbell's mind appears to have been by no means of the essentially or greatly poetic order. There are poets—Tennyson is one—who, having a noble original faculty, circumscribe its developments and regulate its methods with the nicest art, till we become at times almost more conscious of the circumscription and regulation than of the faculty itself. But in these cases we have only to divert our eyes from the details, and look at the composition as a whole—or, if the composition itself is a peculiarly attenuated one, then at the scope and tone of two or three of its companion works—and we shall feel that the art exhibited is no arbitrary system of checks and counterchecks, but a genuine and exquisite medium of expression, native, corresponsive, and coördinated, to the poetical endowment whence the whole thing derives. Some excess there may be of jealous care in the exhibition of the central treasure: it is like the watch which was set upon the Koh-i-noor diamond in 1851, and which would have been foolishly disproportionate to the value of an ordinary gem—but then the thing exhibited and guarded was the Koh-i-noor. Far different is the case with some other writers; and Campbell seems to me to have been of these. A poet who shows an elaborate respect for forms, who spends

himself in efforts to polish and still to repolish, proves so far that his tone of mind is punctilious and somewhat timid: the punctiliousness rises into reverence, and the timidity into a noble awe, if the product thus treated comes out of a great faculty, and constitutes an exquisite work of art—but, if not, the inference turns directly against the author who displays these habits. To be over-scrupulous in work without being vivid in inspiration is the reverse of a poetic constitution: the result, if vigorous and resonant, may have considerable rhetorical, but will hardly have much poetic, merit. A desert blossoming as a rose is not the image of a poet's mind; rather a rose-garden blossoming like itself, with some miracle of delicious surprise on every laden twig. Campbell shows little (if any) bold initiative, or innate fertility, or audacity of invention or resource; he shows not any aptitude—nor even any wish—to throw himself on the inspiration of the moment, and trust to its being a true one and leading him aright. No poet of thoroughly poetic temperament, I suppose, could possibly help doing this at times; he would in fact *know* the inspiration to be a true one—and, knowing that, could not but trust it, and would not mind (if so near an approach to a paradox may be permitted me) its leading him astray. Like a timorous bather, Campbell tries and tries the Castalian stream: at last he dips into it and bathes—but to launch out and swim in it is not for him.

There is indeed one small group of Campbell's poems which appears to me genuinely and remarkably fine, and sufficient to prove him an authentic poet, even were all else of his writing left out of count: these are his patriotic songs—chiefly "Ye Mariners of England," *The Battle of the Baltic*, and *The Soldier's Dream*. In "Ye Mariners of England," the real fundamental excellence, it must be acknowledged, is not Campbell's own; his lyric being simply a recast of the far older song "Ye Gentlemen of England." This latter has the immense merit

of a stately, noble, and at the same time thoroughly popular, structure and melody of verse: it would be difficult to find anything which, in this respect, comes closer to the ideal of a patriotic song. Campbell's poem has the same merit, but it is only a derivative one: he has in that respect neither improved nor innovated. The other two lyrics have the like sort of excellence: they are admirably well poised. It is interesting to observe how great and universally felt an effect is here produced, mainly by the virtue of moderation. Campbell regards his themes with entire simplicity, such as makes his work intelligible and sympathetic to every kind of reader throughout the land, rude or refined; and his measured classical taste, which might have been supposed likely to leave the treatment cold and artificial, succeeds in just striking the chord of national feeling. He strikes it exactly, with a severe yet masterly and glowing touch: the thing comes right once for all, and bears the stamp of a perennial vitality.

Campbell, it would appear, was singularly fortunate in the precise time of his appearing among poets. Published in 1799, the *Pleasures of Hope* gave him forthwith a high position as a correct and cultivated writer, a *safe* man; admired, and deserving to be admired, by the poetic readers of the then elder and (as we now think) rather conventional generation, and also by the juniors formed under their tuition. Perilous disturbers of the public poetic peace were then rearing their head—Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge; also Scott as a ballad-writer, and soon afterwards as a romantic narrative poet: next, a yet more brilliant and fiery band, Byron, Shelley, Keats. Approved by the older readers as worthy to have been a great poet of their own prime, and championed by the younger readers of like taste as a youthful poet maintaining the orthodox succession and tradition, Campbell could always be appealed to when the more daring spirits had to be confuted. He was still only a middle-aged man when the three astonishing meteors, Byron, Shelley,

and Keats, were all extinguished; Scott had long ceased to write poetry: Coleridge's yet remained a contested celebrity, and Wordsworth's even more so; Blake was nowhere. Towards 1825 to 1830 many people were prepared to uphold Campbell as the greatest of living British poets; and, even among those who could not but perceive and acknowledge the vastly higher elevation of Coleridge or Wordsworth, and their more incontestable heritage of enduring poetic renown, the temptation would nevertheless ever and anon recur of citing in opposition the secure and unaggressive virtues of Campbell's Muse.

Our poet was a man of fastidious personal habits, yet fond (at any rate in his later years) of the company of free, jovial, off-hand companions, having the most undefined claims to respectability. He might fairly be called indolent rather than otherwise, and was at any rate dilatory and irresolute in all his business relations: he was also more than commonly sensitive, and naturally, in consequence, at times hasty, querulous, and capricious, at other times obstinate. When his *amour propre*, however, did not intervene, he was readily tractable. Like other self-centred men, he was not exactly formed for friendship: at the same time, he was extremely popular in company. Alternating between society and solitude, he was an excellent host; with a well-bred manner, witty and social, and no desire to parade his eminence invidiously. Certain people accused him of vanity, and it is admitted that some appearance of this weakness increased upon Campbell late in life, and especially after his wife's decease: others consider that he was not at all vain, in the proper sense of the word—only self-conscious in a marked degree. He was morbidly fond of female admiration, and would exhibit jealousy of the most childish kind in mixed company if anything occurred to interfere with or foil his fruition in this way. To mere vulgar fame he seems to have been sufficiently indifferent. Another debate is whether Campbell's conviviality exceeded the strict bounds of temperance. I

believe some of his intimates would have been surprised to hear any one calling the affirmative in question; but, on the opposite side, it has been alleged that that insidious combination—acute feelings and a very little wine—was responsible for appearances which the misinformed construed into semi-fatuity or maudlin inebriation: there could be "no greater mistake in the world." At times, indeed, he seemed decidedly eccentric, and hardly his own master; and was often so abstracted as to need to be recalled by the use of a flapper to what was passing around him. An engaging trait was his great fondness for pretty children. One of his literary acquaintance has compared Campbell's character, demeanour, and conversation, to those of Goldsmith; a comparison which may perhaps be more useful as a general suggestion, applicable chiefly to externals, than as a real estimate of the nature of the two men. We can scarcely fancy the Scotchman, author of the *Pleasures of Hope*, endued with the same genuine and intrinsic *naïveté* of character as the Irishman, author of the *Vicar of Wakefield*.

In person Campbell was small, but not insignificant; his face oval-shaped, the features correct, and the aspect intelligent and cultivated, and to some extent juvenile, without anything to fix very decisively either the observer's attention or his sympathy. He lost his hair at an early age, and wore a wig of youthful redundancy. In dress he was precise, and almost dandyish. He retained throughout life a strong Scotch accent, which lent an added zest to the sprightly and shrewd stories which he had a gift for telling.

His habits of composition, like his taste, character, and person, were fastidious. On the occasion of his contributing his lyric for the Burns Festival, he is said to have returned from Sydenham to London for the sole purpose of altering, on the proof, the relative pronoun "which," in one instance, into "that." With fastidiousness, slowness of composition was

naturally conjoined. Two of the strongest sources of inspiration of classically wrought modern poetry were not largely developed in him: he was not in any high degree either a lover of old times, or a devotee of the charms of "Nature"—scenery and country-life.

POET BORN BETWEEN CAMPBELL AND MOORE.

HORACE SMITH ... ... 1779 to 1849.

THOMAS MOORE.

THOMAS MOORE was born in Dublin on the 28th of May 1780. Both his parents were Roman-Catholics; and he was, as a matter of course, brought up in the same religion, and adhered to it—not perhaps with any extreme zeal—throughout his life. His father was a decent tradesman, a grocer and spirit-retailer—or "spirit-grocer," as the business is termed in Ireland. Thomas received his schooling from Mr. Samuel Whyte, who had been Sheridan's first preceptor, a man of more than average literary culture. He encouraged a taste for acting among the boys: and Moore, naturally intelligent and lively, became a favourite with his master, and a leader in the dramatic recreations.

His aptitude for verse appeared at an early age. In 1790 he composed an epilogue to a piece acted at the house of Lady Borrows, in Dublin; and in his fourteenth year he wrote a sonnet to Mr. Whyte, which was published in a Dublin magazine.

Like other Irish Roman-Catholics, galled by the hard and stiff collar of Protestant ascendency, the parents of Thomas Moore hailed the French Revolution, and the prospects which it seemed to offer of some reflex ameliorations. In 1792 the lad was taken by his father to a dinner in honour of the Revolution; and he was soon launched upon a current of ideas and associations which might have conducted a person of more self-oblivious patriotism to the scaffold on which perished the

friend of his opening manhood, Robert Emmet. Trinity College, Dublin, having been opened to Catholics by the Irish Parliament in 1793, Moore was entered there as a student in the succeeding year. He became more proficient in French and Italian than in the classic languages, and showed no turn for Latin verses. Eventually, his political proclivities, and intimacy with many of the chiefs of opposition, drew down upon him (after various interrogations, in which he honourably refused to implicate his friends) a severe admonition from the University authorities; but he had not joined in any distinctly rebellious act, and no more formidable results ensued to him.

In 1793 Moore published in the *Anthologia Hibernica* two pieces of verse; and his budding talents became so far known as to earn him the proud eminence of Laureate to the Gastronomic Club of Dalkey, near Dublin, in 1794. Through his acquaintance with Emmet, he joined the Oratorical Society, and afterwards the more important Historical Society; and he published *An Ode on Nothing, with Notes, by Trismegistus Rustifucius, D.D.*, which won a party success. About the same time he wrote articles for *The Press*, a paper founded towards the end of 1797 by O'Connor, Addis, Emmet, and others. He graduated at Trinity College in November 1799.

The bar was the career which his parents, and especially his mother, wished Thomas to pursue; neither of them had much faith in poetry or literature as a resource for his subsistence. Accordingly, in 1799, he crossed over into England, and studied in the Middle Temple; and he was afterwards called to the bar, but literary pursuits withheld him from practising. He had brought with him from Ireland his translations from Anacreon; and published these by subscription in 1800, dedicated to the Prince Regent (then the illusory hope of political reformers), with no inconsiderable success. Lord Moira, Lady Donegal, and other leaders of fashionable society, took him up with friendly warmth, and he soon found himself a well-accepted

guest in the highest circles of London. No clever young fellow—without any advantage of birth or of person, and with intellectual attractions which seem to posterity to be of a rather middling kind—ever won his way more easily or more cheaply into that paradise of mean ambitions, the *beau monde*. Moore has not escaped the stigma which attaches to almost all men who thus succeed under the like conditions—that of tuft-hunting and lowering compliances. He would be a bold man who should affirm that there was absolutely no sort of ground for the charge; or that Moore—fêted at Holland House, and hovered-round by the fashionable of both sexes, the men picking-up his witticisms, and the women languishing over his songs—was capable of the same sturdy self-reliance and simple adhesion to principle which might possibly have been in him, and forthcoming from him, under different conditions. Who shall touch pitch, and not be defiled,—who treacle, and not be sweetened? At the same time, it is easy to carry charges of this kind too far, and not always through motives the purest and most exalted. It may be said without unfairness on either side that the sort of talents which Moore possessed brought him naturally into the society which he frequented; that very possibly the world has got quite as much out of him by that development of his faculties as by any other which they could have been likely to receive; and that he repaid patronage in the coin of amusement and of bland lenitives, rather than in that of obsequious adulation. For we are not required nor permitted to suppose that there was the stuff of a hero in "little Tom Moore"; or that the lapdog of the drawing-room would under any circumstances have been the wolf hound of the public sheepfold. In the drawing-room he is a sleeker lapdog, and lies upon more and choicelier-clothed laps than he would in "the two-pair back"; and that is about all that needs to be said or speculated in such a case. As a matter of fact, the demeanour of Moore among the socially great seems to have

been that of a man who respected his company, without failing to respect himself also—any ill-natured cavilling or ready-made imputations to the contrary notwithstanding.

In 1802 Moore produced his first volume of original verse, the *Poetical Works of the late Thomas Little* (an allusion to the author's remarkably small stature), for which he received £60. There are in this volume some erotic improprieties, not of a very serious kind either in intention or in harmfulness, which Moore regretted in later years. Next year Lord Moira procured him the post of Registrar to the Admiralty Court of Bermuda; he embarked on the 25th of September, and reached his destination in January 1804. This work did not suit him much better than the business of the bar: in March he withdrew from personal discharge of the duties; and, leaving a substitute in his place, he made a tour in the United States and Canada. He was presented to Jefferson, and felt impressed by his republican simplicity. Such a quality, however, was not in Moore's line; and nothing perhaps shows the essential smallness of his nature more clearly than the fact that his visit to the United States, in their giant infancy, produced in him no glow of admiration or aspiration, but only a recrudescence of the commonest prejudices—the itch for picking little holes, the petty joy of reporting them, and the puny self-pluming upon fancied or factitious superiorities. If the washy liberal patriotism of Moore's very early years had any vitality at all, such as would have qualified it for a harder struggle than jeering at the Holy Alliance, and singing after-dinner songs of national sentimentalism to the applause of Whig lords and ladies, this American experience may be held to have been its deathblow. He now saw republicans face to face; and found that they were not for him, nor he for them. He returned to England in 1806; and soon afterwards published his *Odes and Epistles*, comprising many remarks, faithfully expressive of his perceptions, on American society and manners.

The volume was tartly criticized in the *Edinburgh Review* by Jeffrey, who made some rather severe comments upon the improprieties chargeable to Moore's early writings. The consequence was a challenge, and what would have been a duel at Chalk Farm, but for unloaded pistols and police interference. This *fiasco* soon led to an amicable understanding between Moore and Jeffrey; and a few years later, about the end of 1811, to a friendship of closer intimacy between the Irish songster and his great poetic contemporary Lord Byron. His lordship, in his youthful satire of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, had made fun of the unbloody duel. This Moore resented, not so much as a mere matter of ridicule as because it involved an ignoring or a denial of a counter-statement of the matter put into print by himself. He accordingly wrote a letter to Byron on the 1st of January 1810, calculated to lead to further hostilities. But, as the noble poet had then already for some months left England for his prolonged tour on the Continent, the missive did not reach him; and a little epistolary skirmishing, after his return in the following year, terminated in a hearty reconciliation, and a very intimate cordiality, almost deserving of the lofty name of friendship, on both sides.

Re-settled in London, and re-quartered upon the pleasant places of fashion, Moore was once more a favourite at Holland House, Lansdowne House, and Donington House, the residence of Lord Moira. His lordship obtained a comfortable post to soothe the declining years of Moore's father, and held out to the poet himself the prospect—which was not however realized—of another snug berth for his own occupancy. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland never received the benefit of the Irish patriot's services in any public capacity at home—only through the hands of a defaulting deputy in Bermuda: it did, however, at length give him the money without the official money's-worth, for in 1835, under Lord Melbourne's ministry, an annual literary pension of £300 was bestowed upon the then

elderly poet. Nor can it be said that Moore's worth to his party, whether we regard him as political sharpshooter or as national lyrist, deserved a less recognition from the Whigs: he had at one time, with creditable independence, refused to be indebted to the Tories for an appointment. Some obloquy has at times been cast upon him on account of his sarcasms against the Prince Regent, which, however well-merited on public grounds, have been held to come with an ill grace from the man whose first literary effort, the *Anacreon*, had been published under the auspices of his Royal Highness as dedicatee, no doubt a practical obligation of some moment to the writer. It does not appear, however, that the obligation went much beyond this simple acceptance of the dedication: Moore himself declared that the Regent's further civilities had consisted simply in asking him twice to dinner, and admitting him, in 1811, to a fête in honour of the regency.

The life of Moore for several years ensuing is one of literary success and social brilliancy, varied by his marrying in 1811 Miss Bessy Dyke, a lady who made an excellent and devoted wife, and to whom he was very affectionately attached, although the attractions and amenities of the fashionable world caused from time to time considerable inroads upon his domesticity. After a while, he removed from London, with his wife and young family, to Mayfield Cottage, near Ashbourne, Derbyshire —a somewhat lonely site. His *Irish Melodies*, the work by which he will continue best known, had their origin in 1797, when his attention was drawn to a publication named *Bunting's Irish Melodies*, for which he occasionally wrote the words. In 1807 he entered into a definite agreement with Mr. Power on this subject, in combination with Sir J. Stevenson, who undertook to compose the accompaniments. The work was prolonged up to the year 1834; and contributed very materially to Moore's comfort in money matters and his general prominence —as his own singing of the Melodies in good society kept up

his sentimental and patriotic prestige, and his personal lionizing, in a remarkable degree. He played on the piano, and sang with taste, though in a style resembling recitative, and not with any great power of voice: in speaking, his voice had a certain tendency to hoarseness, but its quality became flute-like in singing. In 1811 he made another essay in the musical province; writing, at the request of the manager of the Lyceum Theatre, an operetta named *M.P., or the Bluestocking*. It was the reverse of a stage-success; and Moore, in collecting his poems, excluded this work, save as regards some of the songs comprised in it. In 1808 had appeared, anonymously, the poems of *Intolerance* and *Corruption*, followed in 1809 by *The Sceptic*. *Intercepted Letters, or The Twopenny Postbag, by Thomas Brown the Younger*, came out in 1812: it was a huge success, and very intelligibly such, going through fourteen editions in one year. In the same year the project of writing an oriental poem—a class of work greatly in vogue now that Byron was inventing Giaours and Corsairs—was seriously entertained by Moore. This project took shape in *Lalla Rookh*, written chiefly at Mayfield Cottage—a performance for which Mr. Longman the publisher paid the extremely large sum of £3150 in advance: its publication hung over till 1817. The poem has been translated into all sorts of languages, including Persian, and is said to have found many admirers among its oriental readers. Whatever may be thought of its poetic merits —and I for one disclaim any scintilla of enthusiasm—or of its power in vitalizing the *disjecta membra* of orientalism, the stock-in-trade of the Asiatic curiosity-shop, there is no doubt that Moore worked very conscientiously upon this undertaking: he read up to any extent,—wrote, talked, and perhaps thought, islamically—and he trips up his reader with some allusion verse after verse, tumbling him to the bottom of the page, with its quagmire of explanatory footnotes. In 1815 appeared the *National Airs;* in 1816, *Sacred Songs, Duets, and Trios*, the

music composed and selected by Stevenson and Moore; in 1818, *The Fudge Family in Paris*, again a great hit. This work was composed in Paris, which capital Moore had been visiting in company with his friend Samuel Rogers the poet.

The easily earned money and easily discharged duties of the appointment in Bermuda began now to weigh heavy on Moore. Defalcations of his deputy, to the extent of £6000, were discovered, for which the nominal holder of the post was liable. Moore declined offers of assistance; and, pending a legal decision on the matter, he had found it apposite to revisit the Continent. In France, Lord John (the present Earl) Russell was his travelling companion: they went on together through Switzerland, and parted at Milan. Moore then, on the 8th of October 1819, joined in Venice his friend Byron, who had been absent from England since 1816. The poets met in the best of humour, and on terms of hearty good-fellowship—Moore staying with Byron for five or six days. On taking leave of him, Byron presented the Irish lyrist with the MS. of his autobiographical memoirs; a sacred deposit which (as many people have thought ever since) Moore ought either to have used unflinchingly on the understanding upon which it was tendered, or else to have at once declined. The stipulation made by Byron was that the memoirs should not be published till after his death; but that they should be published at some time was his manifest intention. Moore sold the MS. in 1821 to Murray for £2100, after some negotiations with Longman; and consigned it to the publisher's hands in April 1824. Hardly had he done so when the news arrived of Byron's death. Murray now considered that the bad blood certain to be generated by the publishing of the memoirs rendered their suppression highly expedient. Mr. (afterwards Sir Wilmot) Horton on the part of Lady Byron, Mr. Luttrell on that of Moore, Colonel Doyle on that of Mrs. Leigh, Lord Byron's half-sister, and Mr. Hobhouse (afterwards Lord Broughton) as a friend of the deceased poet,

consulted on the subject. The result was that Murray, setting aside considerations of profit, burned the MS. (some principal portions of which nevertheless exist in print, in other forms of publication); and Moore immediately afterwards, also in a disinterested spirit, repaid him the purchase-money of £2100 with interest. It was quite fair that Moore should be reimbursed this large sum by some of the persons in whose interest he had made the sacrifice; and there is reason to believe that this was not neglected. The upshot is that all parties concerned showed an honourable disregard of filthy lucre. Whether Murray (the prime mover in the affair) was justified in taking out of the mouth of Byron the posthumous words which he had resolved to speak, and whether his friend Moore was warranted in assisting the gagging process, are different questions, which will be diversely answered by various minds: for myself, I think the decision was both a weakness and a wrong.

To resume. Bidding adieu to Byron at Venice, Moore went on to Rome with the sculptor Chantrey and the portrait-painter Jackson. His tour supplied the materials for the *Rhymes on the Road*, published, as being extracted from the journal of a travelling member of the Pococurante Society, in 1820, along with the *Fables for the Holy Alliance*. Lawrence, Turner, and Eastlake, were also much with Moore in Rome: and here he made acquaintance with Canova. Hence he returned to Paris, and made that city his home up to 1822, expecting the outcome of the Bermuda affair. He also resided partly at Butte-Coaslin, near Sèvres, with a rich and hospitable Spanish family named Villamil. The debt of £6000 was eventually reduced to £750: both the Marquis of Lansdowne and Lord John Russell pressed Moore with their friendly offers, and the advance which he at last accepted was soon repaid out of the profits of the *Loves of the Angels*—which poem, chiefly written in Paris, was published in 1823. The prose tale of *The Epicurean* was composed about the same time, but did

not issue from the press till 1827: the *Memoirs of Captain Rock* in 1824. He had been under an engagement to a bookseller to write a *Life of Sheridan*. During his stay in France the want of documents withheld him from proceeding with this work: but he ultimately took it up, and brought it out in 1825. It has not availed to give Moore any reputation as a biographer, though the reader in search of amusement will pick out of it something to suit him. George the Fourth is credited with having made a neat *bon mot* upon this book. Some one having remarked to him that "Moore had been murdering Sheridan,"—"No," replied his sacred majesty, "but he has certainly attempted his life." A later biographical performance, published in 1830, and one of more enduring interest to posterity, was the *Life of Byron*. This is a very fascinating book; but more—which is indeed a matter of course—in virtue of the lavish amount of Byron's own writing which it embodies than on account of the Memoir-compiler's doings. However, there is a considerable share of good feeling in the book, as well as matter of permanent value from the personal knowledge that Moore had of Byron; and the avoidance of "posing" and of dealing with the subject for purposes of effect, in the case of a man whose career and genius lent themselves so insidiously to such a treatment, is highly creditable to the biographer's good sense and taste. The *Life of Byron* succeeded, in the list of Moore's writings, a *History of Ireland*, contributed in 1827 to *Lardner's Cyclopædia*, and the *Travels of an Irishman in Search of a Religion*, published in the same year: and was followed by a Life of *Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, issued in 1831. This, supplemented by some minor productions, closes the sufficiently long list of writings of an industrious literary life.

In his latter years Moore resided at Sloperton Cottage, near Devizes in Wiltshire, where he was near the refined social circle of Lord Lansdowne at Bowood, as well as the lettered home of the Rev. Mr. Bowles at Bremhill. Domestic sorrows

clouded his otherwise cheerful and comfortable retirement. One of his sons died in the French military service in Algeria; another of consumption in 1842. For some years before his own death, which occurred on the 25th of February 1852, his mental powers had collapsed. He sleeps in Bromham Cemetery, in the neighbourhood of Sloperton.

Moore had a very fair share of learning, as well as steady application, greatly as he sacrificed to the graces of life, and especially of "good society." His face was not perhaps much more impressive in its contour than his diminutive figure. His eyes, however, were dark and fine; his forehead bony, and with what a phrenologist would recognize as large bumps of wit; the mouth pleasingly dimpled. His manner and talk were bright, abounding rather in lively anecdote and point than in wit and humour, strictly so called. To term him amiable according to any standard, and estimable too as men of an unheroic fibre go, is no more than his due.

No doubt the world has already seen the most brilliant days of Moore's poetry. Its fascinations are manifestly of the more temporary sort: partly through fleetingness of subject-matter and evanescence of allusion (as in the clever and still readable satirical poems); partly through the aroma of sentimental patriotism, hardly strong enough in stamina to make the compositions national, or to maintain their high level of popularity after the lyrist himself has long been at rest; partly through the essentially commonplace sources and forms of inspiration which belong to his more elaborate and ambitious works. No poetical reader of the present day is the poorer for knowing absolutely nothing of *Lalla Rookh* or the *Loves of the Angels*. What then will be the hold or the claim of these writings upon a reader of the twenty-first century? If we except the satirical compositions, choice in a different way, the best things of Moore are to be sought in the *Irish Melodies*, to which a considerable share of merit, and of apposite merit, is not to be denied: yet even here what deserts around

the oases, and the oases themselves how soon exhaustible and forgetable! There are but few thoroughly beautiful and touching lines in the whole of Moore's poetry: here is one—

"Come rest in this bosom, mine own stricken deer."

A great deal has been said upon the overpowering "lusciousness" of his poetry, and the magical "melody" of his verse: most of this is futile. There is in the former as much of *fadeur* as of lusciousness; and a certain tripping or trotting exactitude, not less fully reducible to the test of scansion than of a well-attuned ear, is but a rudimentary form of melody—while of harmony or rhythmic volume of sound Moore is as decisively destitute as any correct versifier can well be. No clearer proof of the incapacity of the mass of critics and readers to appreciate the *calibre* of poetical work in point of musical and general execution could be given than the fact that Moore has always with them passed, and still passes, for an eminently melodious poet. What then remains? Chiefly this. In one class of writing, liveliness of witty banter, along with neatness; and, in the other and ostensibly more permanent class, elegance, also along with neatness. Reduce these qualities to one denomination, and we come to something that may be called "Propriety": a sufficiently disastrous "raw material" for the purposes of a poet, and by no means loftily to be praised or admired even when regarded as the outer investiture of a nobler poetic something within. But let desert of every kind have its place, and welcome. In the cosmical diapason and august orchestra of poetry, Tom Moore's little Pan's-pipe can at odd moments be heard, and interjects an appreciable and rightly-combined twiddle or two. To be gratified with these at the instant is no more than the instrument justifies, and the executant claims: to think much about them when the organ is pealing or the violin playing (with a Shelley performing on the first, or a Mrs. Browning on the second) or to be on the watch for their recurrences, would be equally superfluous and weak-minded.

POETS BORN BETWEEN MOORE AND BYRON.

EBENEZER ELLIOTT	1781 to 1849.
CHARLES ROBERT MATURIN	1782 to 1824.
LEIGH HUNT.....	1784 to 1859.
JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES	1784 to 1862.
ALLAN CUNNINGHAM	1784 to 1842.
THOMAS LOVE PEACOCK.....	1785 to 1866.
RICHARD HARRIS BARHAM	1788 to 1845.

LORD BYRON.

GEORGE GORDON LORD BYRON, a Baron of the United Kingdom, was born on the 22nd of January 1788, in Holles Street, London. He traced his descent from the time of the Conquest: his ancestor Ralph de Burun is recorded in Domesday Book. The Byrons or Birons, having been Knights long before, and Baronets also, were raised to the peerage by Charles I., whose cause the family espoused. The poet was the only son of Captain John Byron, of the Guards, by his second wife, Catharine Gordon of Gight, an Aberdeenshire heiress, belonging to the senior branch of the Gordons, and having some Stuart blood in her veins. John Byron was a nephew of William, the then Lord. A spendthrift and rake, he had aforetime eloped with Lady Carmarthen, who, on being divorced from her husband, became the first wife of Captain Byron, and bore him, about eight years prior to the poet's birth, one daughter, Augusta Mary, afterwards the Honourable Mrs. Leigh. The celebrated Admiral Byron was the poet's grandfather.

Byron was born (it would appear, though the accounts are conflicting) with both feet clubbed, and, through consequent insufficiency of exercise, his legs withered or shrank as far as the knee: the right foot, owing to an accident attending birth, was more particularly distorted. In other respects he grew up extremely handsome; with light-blue or greyish eyes, dark auburn hair curling over the head, and a complexion almost

colourless. His stature was five feet eight and a half. He had a constitutional tendency to fatness, which he kept down by a diet abstemious to the point of semi-starvation, although occasionally he neglected his precautions, and paid the forfeit. Extreme sensitiveness to his lameness, even apart from the practical inconvenience which it caused, embittered his entire life.

Captain Byron squandered his second wife's fortune, and left her to shift for herself. Reduced to an income of £150 a year, she retired with her infant, in 1790, to Aberdeen: a proud, impetuous, inflammable woman, who spoiled the child by frequent petting, and more frequent violences. In her moods, she would call him a "lame brat"; an opprobrious term which rankled in his memory. Inheriting the characteristic defects of both his parents, with a gloomy heart though much superficial gaiety of spirits, with many generous impulses and passionate susceptibilities, he underwent no training that would have elicited his finer and eliminated his more perilous qualities. His father soon levanted to the continent, and died at Valenciennes in 1791.

Byron's schooling began at the age of five; he had been under three instructors before he passed to the Free-school of Aberdeen. The son of the reigning Lord Byron died before his father; the lord himself expired on the 19th of May 1798; and little 'Geordie,' aged ten, was Baron Byron of Rochdale, master of Newstead Abbey in Nottinghamshire, and owner of a large though embarrassed property. He was now made a ward in Chancery, under the guardianship of the Earl of Carlisle. The deceased lord had been a man of vehement passions, who had for more than thirty years lived in a grim retirement at Newstead. This was the sequel of a duel, hardly differing from a mere brawl, with his relative and neighbour Mr. Chaworth of Annesley, in which the latter was killed. Lord Byron had then undergone a trial before his peers, in 1765, in which he was acquitted.

A real lord, especially one whose ancestors came in with the Conquest, hardly needs to be assured that he does own that title: but Mrs. Byron, fond and foolish as ever, was much addicted to impressing the fact upon her son, and he, in after years, repaid her by uniformly addressing her in writing as "The Honourable Mrs. Byron," a distinction to which she had no title whatever. "The canker of aristocracy wants to be cut out" was Shelley's verdict upon Byron: and much more serious reasons than this childish verbal juggling—though that is symptomatic enough—justified the observation. Byron was indeed an ingrained aristocrat—a liberal-thinking one in many respects, but not the less an aristocrat. Hence some of his genuineness; hence also much of his posing and many of his affectations. He hugged his own superiority, adventitious as well as personal, and could not be satisfied with letting other people see the latter, and learn or surmise the former. He must always be abashing them with his distinction from the herd, his scorn for the mass of men; he could always *profess* to be distinct and scornful; and, rather than leave the difference unenforced, he would establish it by lowering himself. The world of readers were to contemplate him as something dark, undefined, and romantic: he must reveal himself a little, and impose upon their imaginations all the more in that the revelation was but partial and fragmentary. In all this, there is no doubt something of personal vanity, and even of that sort of vanity which, had he not been a real unquestionable aristocrat, might rather have been expected of a *parvenu*. But it is such vanity as rests on a deep and morbid love of *artificial* distinctions, the corner-stone of aristocracy in its more prosaic and practical developments: and, as Byron was *not* a *parvenu*, one can but attribute his weakness in this respect to the fact that, on the subject of aristocracy, he gloated from above upon those vulgarest prepossessions which bedazzle all blinking eyes and stimulate all watering mouths below.

Mrs. Byron stayed something less than a year at Newstead, putting her son through a course of Latin, and also, at the hands of a local quack named Lavender, through a course of torture in the futile hope of straightening his right foot. They then removed to London, and Byron went to a boarding-school at Dulwich, where he was well instructed by Dr. Glennie. Hence, in less than two years, to Harrow; and then, in 1805, to Trinity College, Cambridge. At Harrow he was irregular and turbulent, but of generous character; he showed no aptitude for verbal scholarship, although he read a great deal in a miscellaneous way. His mother already introduced him to some fashionable amusements, such as masquerades; she had, at the earlier date, withdrawn him so frequently from the regulated school-attendance at Dulwich that his transference to Harrow was effected by Lord Carlisle.

The emotion of love had been known to Byron even as a child, and was destined—now as lust, now as intrigue, now as passion, seldom or never perhaps as the purging and spiritualizing flame of life—to dominate his whole career. At Aberdeen he had loved a little girl named Mary Duff; about 1800 he was enthralled by his lovely cousin Margaret Parker, who died of a decline within two or three years; in 1803 he first saw Miss Chaworth, the heiress of Annesley, and a descendant of the gentleman whom his granduncle had killed in a duel. She was a beautiful girl, two years older than Byron, whom she regarded and treated as a schoolboy. She was already engaged to a gentleman in the neighbourhood—Mr. Musters, whom in 1805 she married. The match proved an unhappy one, and the lady eventually lost her reason. Byron, from the time when he first met Miss Chaworth, fell deeply in love with her, nor was the passion a transitory one: it darkened many an after year with vain longing and yearning protest. The series of poems incribed to "Thirza" should also be studied by the investigator of Byron's amours or heart-pangs:

the person thus addressed has not been finally identified, but his feeling regarding her appears to have been exceptionally intense.

He passed two years at Trinity College, studious by fits, but mostly idle and dissipated: swimming, boxing, fencing, and pistol-practice, were among his favourite diversions: he also showed—what he ever afterwards retained—a great love of animals, and kept at Cambridge a bear and several bull-dogs, and in later years a wolf. His love for his Newfoundland dog, Boatswain, which he finally buried in a vault at Newstead, and wrote an epitaph upon, is well known. In 1809, having shot an eaglet on the shore of the Gulf of Lepanto, he felt so much compunction that he resolved never again to shoot a bird. His great friend and admiration at college was Charles Skinner Matthews, a Herefordshire gentleman's son, who died in 1811, drowned while bathing in the Cam. Lord Clare and Mr. Hobhouse were also early friends for whom Byron ever afterwards entertained a warm regard. It has been said, indeed, that he never lost a friend: and no intimacy of later years, not even that with Moore or with Shelley, took such hold of him as these youthful associations. Another of his amiable traits was his kind feeling for his servants, who very generally became much attached to him.

Matthews was a sceptic, or more than a sceptic—Lord Byron has termed him an atheist. His lordship also was, from a very early period of youth, a sceptic, and remained such to the end of his life. He had a certain powerful sense of religion—of its majesty, its hold upon the heart, and more especially perhaps its terrors: at times even he half professed himself a christian, tending towards Roman-Catholicism, and he is said, for the last several years of his life, to have made a practice of fasting on Fridays, and kneeling at the passing of any religious procession—perhaps La Guiccioli rather than orthodoxy had to do with this result. Shelley considered that

Byron was by no means a firm unbeliever: on one occasion he shrieked to Trelawny, with the introversion of a holy horror, "By God! he's no better than a christian!" It is, I think, quite open to surmise that Byron, had he lived out an ordinary length of days, might have dictated or dubitated himself into christianity: but, as a matter of fact, he was and always remained a sceptic—a non-believer or doubter, often a sarcastic and defiant, seldom a resolved and unchafing one. In truth, Byron was not a man of opinions at all, whether on religious or other subjects, but of impulses, aspirations, and a temperament at once versatile and uncertain on the surface, and doggedly obdurate at the core. There was a great deal of boyishness in his character from first to last; and he was singularly incapable of any reticence, whether himself or other people were affected. He was personally brave, free from fear of death, but somewhat easily daunted by pain. Friends and acquaintances could do anything, and also nothing, with him; he was the slave and the despot of women, their adorer and their contemner. The twig could at most moments be bent—never the tree inclined.

Byron's first recorded "poem" was written at the mature age of ten—a satire on some old lady who had raised his bile: he afterwards wrote some poetry to his cousin Miss Parker. In November 1806 he had a volume of miscellaneous verses printed, named *Fugitive Pieces:* but, one of the compositions being objected to as unchaste by the Rev. John Becher, of Southwell, a friendly Mentor whom he respected, he promptly destroyed the edition, after two, or perhaps three, copies had been issued. In January 1807 he published *Poems on Various Occasions*, and in the Spring of the same year *Hours of Idleness;* all the three volumes containing several compositions in common. Some critic in the *Edinburgh Review*, reputed to have been Brougham, was discerning enough to see that the *Hours of Idleness* were rubbish, and Whig enough

to write on them a critique such as would now be termed "chaffy" rather than actually severe; he was *not* discerning enough to foresee that there was the making of a real and great poet in the fledgeling author. Indeed, to have divined this would have amounted to a sort of critical second-sight; the poems being, in the amplest sense of the term, poor stuff.

This was the turning-point of Byron's career, and the beginning of his fame. Even before the appearance of the snubbing critique, he had commenced a satire on the writers of his day: this he now took up with centupled ardour, and produced (not without considerable obligation to Gifford's *Baviad and Mæviad*) his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers.* It was published on the 16th of March 1809, three days after he had taken his seat in the House of Lords. On that occasion he was left entirely to his own resources, without any countenance or introduction from his late guardian the Earl of Carlisle or other noble connexions—a circumstance which long embittered his mind. About this time he had entered upon a settled residence at Newstead Abbey, and played some pranks there, with monkish costumes, skull-caps (if not skulls) as drinking-cups, and so on, which may have been more vivacious than decorous. At one time Byron had serious thoughts of coming forward in political life. He spoke thrice in the House of Lords with no discouraging result: Sheridan even thought he would become a distinguished speaker. His first speech (on the 27th of February 1812) was on the Nottingham Frame-breaking Bill; but he did not persevere on this tack.

The *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* could not fail to make a stir, consisting as it did of a rolling fire of abuse against nearly all the most conspicuous literary men of the time. Byron, however, left it very much to take care of itself. An eagerness for travelling had seized him; and on the 11th of June he quitted London, and sailed from Falmouth on the 2nd of July, in company with his friend Hobhouse. He landed at

Lisbon on the 7th; crossed Spain; went on to Prevesa (in Albania), Solara, Arta, and Joannina. On the 12th of October he was introduced to Ali Pacha, and on the 31st began *Childe Harold*. He proceeded to Missolonghi; Parnassus, Castri, Delphi: and reached Athens on Christmas-day. In this city and in Attica he spent about ten weeks. Hence he went to Smyrna; and there, on the 28th of March 1810, finished the second canto of *Childe Harold*. Next he sailed to Constantinople: on the 9th of May he performed his feat—much vaunted by many tongues, and especially his own—of swimming, like Leander, from Sestos to Abydos. He was in Constantinople from the middle of May to the middle of July; then in Athens again, and in the Morea from August to October. Returning once more to Athens, he lived in the Franciscan Convent there in the early part of 1811, writing the *Hints from Horace* and the *Curse of Minerva*. He left Athens for Malta in May, and returned to England in July. On the 1st of August his mother died—the decadent state of her health having, it is said, been fatally aggravated by a fit of rage at the amount of an upholsterer's bill presented to her. Byron was hastening to Newstead when he received the tidings. Though he was neither a dutiful nor a loving son to this injudicious parent, he was not without a deep sense of loss in her death: indeed, he spoke of her as "the only friend he had in the world."

He showed the *Hints from Horace* and *Childe Harold* (limited as yet to cantos 1 and 2) to a confidential acquaintance, Mr. Dallas, and could with difficulty be persuaded that the latter of the two poems was the one to be relied on for a reputation. It came out on the 29th of February 1812; every one knows the expression of the author, as written down in his memoranda—"I awoke one morning and found myself famous." In fact, *Childe Harold* carried everything before it, creating a rush of enthusiasm such as might barely be considered due to the complete poem, and is clearly not warranted by the two opening

cantos. Byron became at once about the most famous and fashionable man in London, after remaining as yet considerably more obscure in society than might have been surmised from his rank and other numerous advantages. He now plunged into fashionable dissipation, and figured as something of a dandy and a good deal of a lady-killer. He entered into the whirl with zest, remained in it with some revulsions, and at last came out of it surfeited. This episode in his life, however, affected him for a permanence: it increased his scornful misanthropy on the one hand, and his weakness for factitious self-display on the other, and he ever after enacted as much the man of fashion as the poet. Byron is one more of the great geniuses who have found "the world" their too inimical friend. He gave Mr. Dallas the £600 which Mr. Murray, the publisher of *Childe Harold*, paid for the copyright; and for some years he pursued, despite considerable temptations to the contrary, the same gratuitously high-minded plan—absolutely refusing any payment for his writings, redounding to his own advantage. His friends benefited in some instances, and in others the amounts went to more general purposes of beneficence. *Manfred* and *The Lament of Tasso* (1817) were, I believe, the first works for which Byron himself accepted payment: since then he continued on that system. His acquaintance with Moore, which soon ripened into intimacy, and great friendliness if not positive friendship, had begun just before the publication of *Childe Harold*, closing a somewhat bellicose correspondence to which, as already stated in the memoir of Moore, the *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* had given rise. This last-named book, always a popular hit, became increasingly embarrassing to Byron as his acquaintance with the leaders in literary and other circles expanded; and in March 1812 he burned the then forthcoming new edition, and closed that entry in his accounts with the world.

In March 1813 he published *The Waltz* (anonymously): in

May the *Giaour*, the first of his frantically admired oriental tales—then new in kind, and highly qualified to fascinate a first and to pall on a second generation of readers; in December, the *Bride of Abydos*. He began the *Corsair* on the 18th and finished it on the 31st of December: 14,000 copies sold in one day. An incredible hubbub was also raised by the publication, in the same volume, of the few lines addressed to Princess Charlotte, "Weep, daughter of a royal line." His *Ode on Napoleon* was written on the 10th of April 1814; on the same day, for no very distinctly apparent reason, he resolved to compose no more poetry, and to suppress such as had been already published. This resolution could not, in the nature of things, hold. The very next month he began *Lara*, and published it in August.

The lionizing process allured but by no means delighted Byron: he sometimes retired to Newstead for longish periods. Intriguing brought little balm to his heart; gambling or other diversion, no resources to his purse. In November 1813 he turned his thoughts seriously to marriage, and proposed to Anna Isabella, only child of Sir Ralph Milbanke, a Baronet in the county of Durham. She was a great heiress, her mother being sister and co-heiress of Lord Wentworth; but her wealth was as yet only in prospect, and so remained all the while that Byron was in direct personal relation with her. On the present occasion Miss Milbanke declined his offer; but she and Byron continued corresponding on terms of friendship, not at all of courtship. The lady was, in point of age, a very appropriate choice, being a little younger than her suitor: she was highly educated, of a serious and dignified character, and a paragon of almost all the virtues under heaven. In September 1814 the poet proposed to another lady, with whom, however, he does not appear to have been in the least in love: he was again unsuccessful. He then forthwith, on the 15th of the same month, reapplied to Miss Milbanke, and this time he was accepted. The marriage took place on the 2nd of January 1815. Byron, who

was intensely superstitious in such matters, supplied his own evil omen on the present occasion—saying to his wedded bride, as they were about to depart, "*Miss Milbanke*, are you ready?" For a while, Byron (to trust his own correspondence, amid other testimony) sincerely admired his wife, and perhaps almost loved her; but this was not to endure for long.

Lady Byron, in 1856, divulged to the distinguished American novelist, Mrs. Beecher Stowe, that Byron had, before his marriage, begun an incestuous intrigue with his half-sister, Mrs. Leigh, a lady not graced by any charm of person; and that he continued this intrigue after marriage, making it no secret to his wife herself. A daughter, it is added, was the offspring of this connexion, and was looked after by Lady Byron with divine long-suffering, until death removed the morbidly wayward girl. This supposed daughter of Byron, Elizabeth Medora, born in 1815, was the undisputed offspring (fourth child) of Mrs. Leigh, and was generally regarded and treated as one of the children of the marriage between that lady and Colonel Leigh. Medora's history[1] is itself a singular and painful one. I need not here enter into it, except to say that at some time or other, probably in or about 1831 (according to Medora's own account), her eldest sister, Mrs. Trevanion, and Mr. Trevanion as well, informed her that Colonel Leigh was not in truth her father; and in 1840 Lady Byron further announced to her that her real father had been Lord Byron. The ground for not summarily disbelieving the story narrated by her ladyship to Mrs. Stowe, and given to the world by the latter in 1869, is that Lady Byron obviously credited its truth when she communicated with her American friend, and credited it for reasons which, barring mental hallucination, must be regarded as weighty. The grounds for rejecting it are various; and very chiefly these—that letters addressed at the time by

[1] Fully set forth in the volume, *Medora Leigh, A History and an Autobiography. Edited by Charles Mackay. Bentley*, 1869.

Lady Byron to Mrs. Leigh tell potently in the opposite direction, and that considerable cause has been shown for thinking that her ladyship may in numerous instances, including this one, have been subject to unfounded impressions, have brooded over supposititious conditions of things, and have arrived at conclusions strangely irrelevant to their assumed premises. The very high character always borne by Mrs. Leigh counts also, and deservedly, for much. Lady Byron's averments in this matter have been very generally scouted, with outpourings of indignation and scorn, doubled for the behoof of the recorder of her confidences, Mrs. Stowe. People who *will* not believe naturally *do* not believe: others, sufficiently open-minded to believe upon cause shown, joyfully allow that adequate cause has not been shown as yet.

Lord Wentworth died in April 1815; Lady Byron's parents then assumed the name of Noel (which, about the beginning of 1822, Byron also, upon the death of Lady Noel, adopted, calling himself thenceforward Noel Byron). Soon incompatibilities of temper or character between his wife and himself (assuming that there was nothing graver in the background) began to manifest themselves: his money-embarrassments too were grave, resulting in no less than nine executions in his house within his first and only year of married life. He sought his pleasure away from home. On the 10th of December 1815 his wife bore him a daughter, who was christened Augusta Ada, and who eventually became Countess of Lovelace. Ada was a family name of olden date: Augusta was (as we have seen) the name of Byron's half-sister, this very Mrs. Leigh. Of her, it should here be observed, he had known very little in early days, but he had a deep and steady affection for her in his manhood: an affection which had hitherto been regarded as fraternal only, and highly honourable to both parties —and such it undoubtedly, and with great seeming genuineness, appears to be in the poems which he addressed to her.

On the 15th of January 1816, Lady Byron went with her infant on a visit to her father in Leicestershire. She wrote to Byron in playful and affectionate terms; and then on the 2nd of February announced that she would never live with him again. The full reasons alleged for this resolve had never till our own days been publicly assigned, nor were they even notified with any precision to Byron himself, if his own account is not to be discarded. It is certain, however, that, before she left for Leicestershire, Lady Byron had conceived a suspicion that her husband was insane, and sixteen heads of surmisable lunacy were drawn up; that she set enquiries on foot, which satisfied her, both that he was sane, and also that his past conduct, not being explicable on the ground of madness, was beyond excuse; and that her counsel, Mr. Lushington, considered a separation—which was not (though Byron fancied it was) specially prompted by her own family—indispensable. Beyond this, it used to be only an individual here and another there who professed to know the exact grounds of separation. It was stated, for instance, that Byron brought into his house as a mistress an actress named Mrs. Mardyn (he was at this time connected with the management of Drury Lane Theatre); but Moore denies it. Byron, immediately after the catastrophe, exonerated his wife from all blame, and spoke of her in the highest terms. For about a year he ostensibly continued to contemplate reunion as possible: he then gave up the idea, and became less forbearing towards Lady Byron, though it cannot be said (after making due allowance for irritation, vindictiveness, badinage, and fictitious accessories) that any of his writings contains a truly serious imputation upon her. It appears that, at the very moment when he received the announcement of intended separation, Byron's house was in the possession of bailiffs. His troubles were therefore great, and his exasperation may have been proportional: yet there seems little reason—however sincere may possibly have been the

sentiment expressed in the celebrated "Fare thee well"—to believe that his regret at the step adopted by his wife was essentially very bitter. The pettishness of society (if it was indeed pettishness and partizanship, and not, as there may now at last be some reason for surmising, deep abhorrence of abnormal libertinism) broke forth with astounding acrimony against the favourite once fondled with such frantic vehemence. Byron had not apparently made himself unpopular in any marked way before this occurrence: and, not to speak of his personal claims, his genius had continued adding poem to poem, though not quite of late. But ignorance, spite, and "swarmery" (so well named by Carlyle), or something other than all these, combined to hoot him out of sight. Had he fixed to remain, his defiant pride might have sufficed for that or a greater feat: but loathing and contempt were professedly in his heart, and a hot desire to be quit of so much turmoil and unreason. On the 25th of April he sailed for Ostend, wishing and destined never to return. His most recent writings had been the *Hebrew Melodies* in December 1814, and the *Siege of Corinth* and *Parisina*, published in January and February 1816.

Passing through Belgium and along the Rhine, with his travelling physician Dr. Polidori[1] as companion, Byron settled for a while on the banks of the Lake of Geneva, where he became acquainted with Shelley, and the two ladies who were along with him—Miss Godwin (Mrs. Shelley) and Miss Clairmont. The third canto of *Childe Harold* was commenced in May 1816, and finished in July; the *Prisoner of Chillon* was composed at Ouchy; in September *Manfred* was begun. In October Byron went on into Italy, and settled at Venice, where, with little intermission, he spent the succeeding three years in an alternation of poetical production and debauchery, mostly of the lowest type and most miscellaneous reckless-

[1] Maternal uncle of the present writer.

ness. A certain turn for penuriousness began now to show itself in his character, chequering other and very opposite tendencies which were more germane to his true nature: his allusions to the love of money, in *Don Juan* especially, are not to be entirely rejected as banter, nor yet accepted too seriously. At Venice he took up also the study of the Armenian language. The *Lament of Tasso*, *Beppo*, and the commencement of the 4th canto of *Childe Harold*, pertain to 1817 (the last ensuing after a brief visit with Hobhouse to Rome); *Mazeppa* to 1818. *Beppo* is to be marked as the first-fruits of a new poetic fertility in Byron, the most genuine and vital of all its phases, giving birth soon afterwards to the immortal, the unprecedented and unrivalled masterpiece, *Don Juan*. The first canto of this great work was finished in September 1818; and the poem had been carried on to the completion of its fourth canto before the author removed to Ravenna. It was published in instalments, anonymously (but with well-understood authorship), and with an apocalyptic outpouring of all phials of right-minded wrath upon its levities and cynicisms.

In April 1819 Byron was introduced to a beautiful and quite youthful married lady, the Countess Guiccioli, wife of one of the richest noblemen of Romagna, of advanced age: her maiden name had been Teresa Gamba; her father Count Gamba was living, as well as a brother, Pietro. She was very blonde, with rich yellow hair, and endowed with much sentiment and sweetness of character. It was not long before she was desperately in love with Byron, and he with her. A *liaison* was the unfailing consequence; and continued throughout its entire course, however censurable its concomitants, to be the love-affair in which, of all the many he engaged in, Byron showed the most constancy, feeling, and character. As far as he was affected, the Countess more than merited all the devotion which the poet could bestow upon her: she was true to him, warmly loving, and disinterested. Her husband's conduct,

during the earlier and less public stages of the amour, was such as to inspire no consideration for him, and leave him no tribute of sympathy, even from a severe moralist, when the most trying crisis for him arrived: indeed, his behaviour seems to have been so inexcusable, and so inconsistent with the plainest rules of self-respect, that it was the Countess who obtained from the Pope a judicial separation from her husband, not he (as might have been anticipated) from her. She forewent all the worldly advantages of her wealthy marriage, and retained henceforward an annual income of only about £200 per annum. This was in July 1820.

Byron had removed in December 1819 from Venice to Ravenna, and had pretty soon—more especially through his connexion with Count Gamba and his son—mixed himself up in the revolutionary movements of secret societies: he was enrolled among the Carbonari. The result was that the Gambas—who at first did not favour Byron's love for the Countess Guiccioli, but did eventually countenance it—got exiled from the Papal States. They went to Tuscany, and soon selected Pisa as a residence. There Byron joined them in November 1821; the Shelleys were also now fixed in Pisa.

Meanwhile Byron had continued his poetic labours. The *Prophecy of Dante* was written in March 1820: and followed by *Marino Faliero*, *The Blues*, *Sardanapalus*, the *Letters on Pope* (prose), *The Two Foscari*, *Cain*, *The Vision of Judgment*, and *Heaven and Earth*. All this was before Byron's arrival in Pisa. *Don Juan* was for a while discontinued, in consequence of the protests of La Guiccioli, who resented so unideal a treatment of the passion of love: it was resumed in February 1822, under a promise from the poet that he would be better-behaved, and again taken up in August of that year, and in February 1823.

Byron, on receiving a visit at Ravenna from Shelley in August 1821, had started the idea of getting up a quarterly

magazine, in which he and Shelley could publish their future writings. Shelley availed himself of the notion in the interest of his friend Leigh Hunt, then in London editing the *Examiner;* and it was ultimately arranged that Hunt should come over to Italy, and the three (according to Byron's view of the matter) share the profits. In reality, however, Shelley had resolved to have little or no connexion with the magazine as a writer, and absolutely none as a recipient of the proceeds. Hunt and his large family reached Genoa in June 1822, he having by this time relinquished his direct control over the *Examiner*—a fact very disappointing to Lord Byron when he learned it, as his lordship had been relying upon the close *camaraderie* of that weekly paper as one mainstay of the quarterly *Liberal.* Hunt went on to Leghorn, where Byron was staying just then, and to Pisa, where arrangements had been made for his accommodation. He could not have arrived at a more unfortunate moment. Street-squabbles, house-squabbles, and political complexities, in all of which Byron and his immediate surroundings had some share, had determined the Tuscan Government to follow the Papal example, and oust the Gambas from the territory: and Byron—not unnaturally, though with too ready a disregard of Hunt's valid claims on his plighted word and honourable consideration—was minded to follow his mistress and her family forthwith, and leave the *Liberal* very much to its own devices. This difficulty was barely patched over when a death-blow to the prospects of a smooth working of the *Liberal* (and to many other more important matters) occurred by the drowning of Shelley in the Mediterranean on the 8th of July: as long as he lived, even had he abstained from active connexion with the magazine, his noble nature and well-proved friendliness would have been a bond of union or a medium of conciliation between the not easily coalescing requirements and characters of Byron and Hunt. With the loss of Shelley, the likelihood of a real success vanished. The *Liberal* went on for a year, a

nucleus for the publication of the inimitable *Vision of Judgment* and the *Heaven and Earth* of Lord Byron, along with other matter, and for the conflicting petulancies of his lordship and of Hunt to twine around, and put forth untidy tendrils and plaguing thorns. It was an ill-concocted scheme; and, in point of commercial profit, though not a disastrous failure, by no means a handsome success. Hunt was more to be condoled with than blamed in the matter, and perhaps Byron also. The latter was now living in Genoa, still maintaining his semi-conjugal relation to the Countess Guiccioli. An acknowledged natural daughter of his by another lady, Allegra, had died in the Spring of 1822. Before leaving Pisa, he had written *Werner* and *The Deformed Transformed;* in Genoa, in January and February 1823, the *Age of Bronze* and *The Island*—which is his last poem of any length.

Byron's life may very fairly be divided into the tragic five acts. The first comprises his boyhood and adolescence, up to his disappointment with Miss Chaworth; the second, his coming of age, early literary vicissitudes, travels in the East of Europe, commencement of *Childe Harold*, and frenzies of poetic success; the third, his marriage and separation; the fourth, his Italian sojourn, and amour with La Guiccioli. The curtain rises for the fifth act, and we find it in striking contrast with its precursors.

Greece was now in the full career of insurrection against the execrable Turkish domination. In April 1823 Byron had already begun turning his thoughts in that direction; and in May he received overtures from the London Committee of Philhellenes. His early travels in Greece, his European name and considerable means, pointed him out as one whose coöperation would be invaluable. Byron, to his perennial honour, determined to aid the noble cause, not only with money, but in person, and with arms in his hand. It has been said that, besides the more obvious and worthy motive, he was partly influenced by two considerations—waning ardour in his love-affair with Countess

Guiccioli, and a strong impression that, as a poet, he had begun to lose the public ear. This latter opinion he did undoubtedly entertain, and now at last with some degree of warrant for it: the statement as to the Countess rests on a more dubious surmise. At any rate, he sailed from Genoa on the 14th of July, with Count Pietro Gamba, having bespoken the very apposite companionship of Captain Trelawny, whom he had known for a year and a half, at first in connexion with Shelley. They reached the Island of Cephalonia early in August. Hence Trelawny went on to the Morea, and Byron, after some while, to Missolonghi, in western Greece, where he arrived on the 5th of January 1824. At both places the poet displayed a talent for public business that astonished people: he had some very tough work in introducing a little order into a chaos of interests, intrigues, and projects. Before reaching Missolonghi, he had, on the night of the 3rd of January, swum a long distance in rough weather: two or three days afterwards he complained of pains in all his bones, and was never wholly rid of the sensation again. The weather at Missolonghi was detestable, and the place unhealthy. At the beginning of February he got wet through, and on the evening of the 15th had a dreadful convulsive fit, which bereft him of sense for a time, and was treated by over-bleeding. The medical man who had accompanied him from Italy, Dr. Bruno, was young, and seemingly rather raw at his profession. A band of mutinous Suliotes broke into the room while Byron was in this trying situation: his firmness overawed them, and they retired. On the 30th of January he had received a regular commission from the insurrectionary Greek government, appointing him commander-in-chief for an expedition to besiege Lepanto, then held by the Turks: but he was fated never to undertake this glorious work.

His fatigues were already too much for his broken health: but he would not give up, and nobly said "I will stick by the cause as long as a cause exists." The holy cause survived it

hero and martyr. On the 9th of April he again got wet through, and returned to Missolonghi in a violent perspiration. Fever and rheumatic pains ensued. Next day he was again able to take a ride; but on the evening of the 11th he became worse, and by the 14th was in manifest danger. For several days, cautious from his recent experience, he refused to be bled: at last he consented, but it was considered too late. Inflammation attacked the brain; a lethargy set it, lasting twenty-four hours. Byron had made futile efforts to convey some intelligible message for his wife, child, and sister: his last words were "Now I shall go to sleep." He opened his eyes for one moment, and then closed them for ever. The great poet expired at six P.M. on the 19th of April 1824. Bitter was the mourning of his attached comrades and attendants; bitter that of Greece; bitter the dismay of the civilized world; bitter the self-reproaches of many Englishmen.

The corpse was brought home, and buried in the family vault at Hucknall, near Newstead. The will of Lord Byron left to Mrs. Leigh the bulk of his property, beyond such as was settled on his wife and daughter. While at Venice, he had given to Moore a fragmentary autobiography (referred to in the notice of that poet), consisting principally of a narrative of his married life, with many highly-spiced details concerning friends and acquaintances. The fortunate recipient having disposed of this prize to the publisher Murray, the latter consulted Mrs. Leigh, and Byron's executor Hobhouse, and, with their approval, committed the MS. to the flames. Moore has intimated that a great deal of it could not possibly have been published —not even at a date remote from the writer's death; and that the portions most material to the life of Byron himself are substantially reproduced in his published journals and other memoranda.

Wilfulness was probably the leading characteristic of Byron as a man: himself was his centre, and a very uncertain centre too, for he was not less wayward than wilful and egotistic. He had no leading principle of action, and, had he had one, would

een perpetually violating it. We must take him as he —a dazzling and a tantalizing phenomenon. How many has he not thrilled with rapture and suspense! how many egulated minds" has he not lashed or laughed into rage! poetry has two main constituents — passion and wit. e compelled rigidly to assess the value of these two ients, according to the positive merit of their respective ucts, we should probably have to say that the wit was the finer power of the two. The great superiority of *Don Juan* (and, as a minor sample, the *Vision of Judgment*) to all his other work consists ultimately in this—that here the passion and the wit are perpetually interpenetrating and enhancing one another, and are both perfectly limpid and unforced. There is no overloading or attitudinizing in the passion: in the wit, no conventional standard of substance or of form. It is not, however, necessary to settle with any nicety the rival claims of passion and of wit as the informing powers of Byron's work; nor even does the mind acquiesce in either or both of these excellent qualities as the final characteristics. The great thing in Byron is GENIUS — that quality so perilous to define, so evanescent in its aroma, so impossible to mistake. If ever a man breathed whom we recognize (athwart much poor and useless work, when strictly tested) as emphatically the Genius, that man was Byron: and, if ever genius made poetry its mouthpiece, covering with its transcendent utterances a multitude of sins whether against art or against the full stature of perfect manhood, Byron's is that poetry. It is therefore as imperishable as genius itself. Its forms have much of the transitory, much even of the spurious: they have already been "found out" to a great extent, and, after suffering a term of more than merited depreciation by reaction, are righting themselves in rather a battered and blowzed condition. But these are the forms: the essence is the genius, and that knows no vicissitude, and acknowledges no fleeting jurisdiction.

POET BORN BETWEEN BYRON AND SHELLEY.

BRYAN WALLER PROCTER ..... 1789 to 1874.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

CHAUCER, Shakespeare, Milton, Shelley—these are, I believe, the four sublimest sons of song that England has to boast of among the mighty dead—say rather among the undying, the never-to-die. Let us remember also two exceptional phenomena, an "inspired ploughman," Burns, and an unparallelled poetess, Mrs. Browning, and be thankful for such a national destiny. There are plenty of others: but those four are, if I mistake not, *the* four.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born on the 4th of August 1792 at Field Place, Sussex, the seat of his father, Mr. Timothy Shelley. The family is of high antiquity and distinction, and is at the present day represented by a peer (Lord de L'Isle and Dudley) and two Baronets. Mr. Timothy Shelley was the son of Mr. (afterwards Sir) Bysshe Shelley, a man of talent, handsome presence, varied experiences, and eccentric habits: in the latter years of his life he lived in great seclusion at Horsham. He had married two heiresses, and had families by both. The former line was represented by Mr. Timothy Shelley, of whom Percy was the eldest child and heir; the later line was represented by Sir John Shelley-Sidney, of Penshurst. Mr. Timothy Shelley married Elizabeth, the beautiful daughter of a gentleman settled at Effingham, Surrey, Mr. Charles Pilfold. Four daughters and a son, in addition to Percy, grew up: two of the daughters are still alive. Mr. Timothy Shelley (who succeeded to the baronetcy, and died, long after his illustrious son, in 1844) was M.P. for Shoreham; a commonplace sort

country-gentleman, kindly enough but somewhat mulish and violent-tempered—in politics, an adherent of the Whig party, and especially of the local magnates, the ducal family of Norfolk. The mother was a woman of good abilities, but not with any literary turn.

Shelley grew out of infancy at home, receiving a little schooling at the neighbouring village of Warnham, and afterwards at Sion House School, Brentford. The master here was a hard Scotchman, and the pupils formed an unrefined and ungentle team. Shelley, shrinkingly sensitive and open to all delicate impressions, endured much misery at their hands, and soon found out that the world into which he was born was not exactly *his* sort of world. We learn from the Dedication to the *Revolt of Islam* how acutely he felt his isolation and distresses, and how early he resolved to be "wise, and just, and free, and mild."

Hence, in his fourteenth year, he passed to Eton, where things went on much the same. Shelley refused with scorn and exasperation to submit to the fagging system: his spirit was not to be bent or broken, and he had his way. A tutor of the school, Dr. James Lind, was his early friend, and the trainer of his mind towards many high achievements. In especial he inspired the youth with a vivid though transitory love for chemical experiment, and with enlarged ideas of toleration and free enquiry in matters of religion. The anecdote of Shelley's setting fire to a tree on the common, by gunpowder which he lit with a burning-glass, is one of the best-known in his biography. At one time, being attacked by a fever which affected the brain, he was (or supposed himself to be) in some danger of being sent by his father to a private madhouse; Dr. Lind hurried to Field Place, cured him, and averted the peril. Shelley's career at Eton under Dr. Keate, and amid schoolfellows whom he was perpetually resisting, was a stormy one: last, in 1809 (it has been said, but with uncertain authenticity),

he struck a penknife through the hand of one of his young persecutors, and was in consequence withdrawn from the school. He had been, not a diligent scholar, but in some respects a zealous one; translating, for instance, half of Pliny's Natural History, and very ready, though far from scrupulously correct, at Latin verses. He had always a splendid memory and an insatiate love of reading.

Shelley was already an author, and now figures as a lover as well. He wrote a number of wild romances in his boyhood, of which one, *Zastrozzi*, was published in 1810, and another, *St. Irvyne, or the Rosicrucian*, at the end of the same year. The merciful hand of Time has suppressed the others, and left only these two outpourings to excite alternate hilarity at their absurdities, and astonishment at the condition of mind which could induce a publisher to accept—much more to invest in—either of them. *Zastrozzi* was actually purchased for some £40, and obtained a certain degree of success; *St. Irvyne* did not go down the public throat so easily. In 1810 Shelley had also made a first appearance in print as a poet. His volume was entitled *Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire*, and his sister Elizabeth had really a hand in it. Somehow—but nobody now knows with whom the true responsibility rested—some compositions by M. G. Lewis had been pirated into this volume, and it was immediately suppressed, and remains extinct.[1] Much

[1] Mr. Kirby (27 Bloomsbury Street) unearthed in 1875, and kindly communicated to me, a contemporary criticism on *Victor and Cazire*, which it appears was "small 8vo, pp. 64." The review is in *The Poetical Register, and Repository of Fugitive Poetry, for* 1810–11. As a literary curiosity, I subjoin it here.—"There is no *Original Poetry* in this volume: there is nothing in it but downright scribble. It is really annoying to see the waste of paper which is made by such persons as the putters-together of these 64 pages. There is, however, one consolation for the critics who are obliged to read all this sort of trash. It is that the crime of publishing is generally followed by condign punishment in the shape of bills from the stationer and printer, and in the chilling tones of the bookseller, when, to the questions of the anxious rhymer how the book sells, he answers that not more than half-a-dozen copies have been sold."

about the same time that he left Eton, Shelley fell in love with his beautiful young cousin Harriet Grove, the daughter of a clergyman in Wiltshire. She received his homage graciously, and the two families were ready to look upon the affair as a match. Soon, however, the sceptical tone of Shelley's mind and correspondence excited alarm in Miss Grove's parents, and in her own tepid bosom as well; and, after the catastrop he which befell Percy at Oxford in the Spring of 1811, the courtship was broken off, and Harriet soon married another suitor —leaving her cousin to ponder suicide, to denounce bigotry, and gradually to cicatrize his wounded affections.

In the autumn of 1810 he went to University College, Oxford, and at once struck up an extreme intimacy with a fellow-student, Mr. Thomas Jefferson Hogg. The bond between them was a common love of intellectual enquiry and of literature. Probably also Mr. Hogg, like Shelley, had a sceptical turn in religious matters; but the enthusiastic and revolutionary elements of the poet's mind found no counterpart in his friend's, whose writings on the contrary exhibit him to us in the quality of a high Tory, an easy man of the world, and one habituated to regard all things from a caustic, and even a somewhat cynical, point of view. With vigorous and little supervised study, an intimate friendship, active habits, the simplest tastes, and (according to the best testimony) the purest habits in morals, Shelley greatly enjoyed the period of his Oxford studentship: but it was not to last long.

Soon after his arrival at the University he showed Hogg some poems he was proposing to publish. Hogg saw that they were poor stuff, and told him as much; and eventually he and Shelley set to work at converting their juvenilities into intentional and caricatured extravagances. In this altered form the book was published as *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson, edited by John Fitzvictor;* the supposititious authoress being a crazy washerwoman who had attempted

the life of George the Third, and who was now not in reality dead, but vegetating in a madhouse. This farrago of burlesqued revolutionary commonplaces was accepted in good-faith, and even admired, by university men. Shelley also published, there is strong reason for believing, *A Poetical Essay on the Existing State of Things;* but not a single copy of it is forthcoming.

He had contracted at Eton, under the influence of Dr. Lind, a habit of writing pseudonymously to various literary personages on speculative and other subjects. At Oxford he continued this practice, and drew up and advertised a little syllabus which he termed *The Necessity of Atheism,* and which he circulated, enclosed in letters (of course not avowing his real name) wherein he professed to have come across the pamphlet, and to be unable to refute its arguments. It is, I think, futile to deny that the author of *The Necessity of Atheism* was himself, when he wrote it, an atheist: he had indeed been named "Shelley the Atheist" at Eton, though some controversy as to the true origin of that term has arisen. A breakdown was likely to ensue, and did ensue. Shelley was denounced to the authorities of his College as the probable author of the atheistic pamphlet; was summoned to admit or deny the charge; and, on refusing to do either, was expelled. Hogg, who had been his confidant and abettor, shared the same fate.

Shelley and Hogg left Oxford for London on the 26th of March 1811, and soon separated, as the latter had to go to York to study conveyancing. Shelley was in the first instance excluded from the paternal home, and lived mainly on the pocket-money which his sisters goodnaturedly hoarded, and sent round to him by a schoolfellow, Harriet Westbrook. After a short while, however, his father relented, and allowed the delinquent £200 per annum. It must be added that Percy was the reverse of a dutiful son. Difference of ideas and of character, and the frequent conflicts of circumstance, in-

spired him with a strong antipathy to his father, transcending to all appearance the bounds of reason, and certainly those of filial respect and obligation.

Harriet Westbrook now becomes the most important figure in Shelley's singular and chequered career. She was a very charming blonde, aged sixteen, the daughter of a retired hotel-keeper in easy circumstances. Shelley visited at her father's house, and soon talked Harriet out of the ordinary routine of religious and moral assumptions. Afterwards, while he was on a visit to a cousin in Wales, Harriet corresponded with him, alleging many horrors of petty persecution on her father's part, and she volunteered to "throw herself on his protection." Shelley returned to London; found pretty Harriet in a pining condition, and in all the languor of "sentiment" for himself; and, about the beginning of September 1811, eloped with her to Edinburgh. Here he forthwith married her: which was in every respect an honourable act of youthful unworldliness, and all the more so in that his own pet theories were directly adverse to the formal institution of marriage. No evidence is forthcoming to show that the poet was ever strictly in love with Harriet; while on the other hand a very strong presumption arises that she, more especially guided by her elder sister Eliza and the family generally, had "set her cap" at so highly eligible a *parti* as the grandson and eventual heir of the extremely wealthy Sir Bysshe Shelley, of Castle Goring. No doubt too Shelley's own genius, delicate beauty of aspect, and never-failing personal fascination, were highly impressive to the girlish Harriet; and her many graces of face, figure, and manner, not indifferent to him. Harriet was by no means uneducated, nor wanting in those superficial likings for literature which go with education. She was a frank, kind, nice girl, and in all ways worthy of any ordinary man's love. Unfortunately, to so exceptional a man as Shelley, her attractions were not made for a permanency: the heart of a poet is

"deep calling *to deep*," and, if it turns out that there is only shallow to respond, the result is too well assured—

> "No song, but sad dirges,
> Like the wind in a ruined cell."

As Mrs. Siddons said in a tragedy voice to the haberdasher's assistant, "But will it wash?" Charming Harriet's conjugal gifts of mind and character did not "wash."

The income of Shelley during his married life with Harriet averaged something like £400 a year—not too certain perhaps in its inflowing, and continually forestalled by some act of lavish generosity for public or private objects. To have rejected (as he did) £2000 a year, tendered on the sole condition of his entailing the patrimonial estate on his eldest son, or in default on his younger brother, was, under the circumstances, a noble adhesion to principle—for Shelley abhorred the system of primogeniture. He was very migratory in his movements; and much and increasingly oppressed by the presence of Miss Westbrook in his house, wherein, almost immediately after his marriage, she established herself as general dictatress and woman of business. From Edinburgh he went to York, staying with Hogg; to Keswick in Cumberland, where he made the acquaintance of Southey; to Dublin, where he agitated for Catholic emancipation and repeal of the union; to Nantgwillt in Radnorshire; Lynmouth in Devonshire; Tanyrallt in Carnarvonshire. Lynmouth he quitted in August 1812, because his servant had been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for distributing and posting-up a political *Declaration of Rights* drawn out by Shelley, and this and other circumstances made him an object of suspicion to the oppressive and timorous Tory government of the day; and Tanyrallt he abandoned in March 1813, alleging that a twice-repeated nocturnal attempt at assassination had been made upon him. This is only one out of many wondrous stories told by Shelley as pertaining to various stages of his career. Some of them are proved untruths

others more than questionable; others again may be believed without gross credulity. This tale of the assassination is of the more than questionable class: nobody could trace the assassin, or guess why assassination should have been attempted at all. Yet there are *some* considerations which save the allegation from absolute, unhesitating rejection. *Why* Shelley told these portentous stories is a strange problem. He had a great respect for truth, and endured much tribulation in the cause of speculative verity, as estimated by himself. In default of a better reason, one is fain to say that he had a most excitable imagination, fancied many things, and attitudinized or exaggerated in others; a habit which was greatly fostered by his practice (which began late in 1811) of taking laudanum, often in large doses, to mitigate the pangs of a spasmodic disease which afflicted him from an early age, and on to the conclusion of his noble and too brief life.

Snapped out of Carnarvonshire by the pistol of a probably non-existent bravo, Shelley, with Harriet and Eliza, returned to Dublin, visited Killarney, and next settled awhile in London, still shifting frequently from house to house. His first child, Ianthe Eliza, was born in London in 1813. About the same time he printed his earliest considerable poem, *Queen Mab*. He did not publish it: but that function was performed for him by a pirating bookseller, in 1821. *Queen Mab* is a work of some poetic suggestiveness, much youthfulness, and great audacity of opinion and expression: it produced a certain sensation, chiefly by dint of the last-named characteristic. Shelley was preëminently an enthusiast, and even (so far as a perfectly tolerant man can be one) a fanatic: he actually fancied that a performance like *Queen Mab* was capable of producing a change in the opinions and practices of society. Such an overweening notion may be pardoned to a youth of twenty-one; a few years later he perceived the world of life and of custom to be made of rather tougher material. His next residence was at Bracknell

n Berkshire; then for a short while in Edinburgh; and back o London, broken by visits to Bracknell.

We have now reached the end of 1813, and approach the finale of Shelley's married life with Harriet. She did not respond to his demands on heart and head; teased him sometimes to act in modes inconsistent with his ideas; and continued, by active or passive concurrence, to fasten on him "the daughter of the horseleech," Eliza Westbrook. Things were in a critical state by the close of 1813, yet still so far remediable as that Shelley remarried Harriet in London on the 24th of March 1814, in order to remove any conceivable uncertainties attaching to the Scotch marriage. The presumable early advent of a son and heir was no doubt a cogent motive. By May 1814 things passed from the critical to the catastrophic stage. Shelley now became acquainted with Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, then sixteen years of age, the daughter of the celebrated author of *Political Justice*, *Caleb Williams*, and other works for which the young poet and speculator entertained a huge admiration. If a reunion of heart with Harriet was possible before, it now became impossible. Shelley fell helplessly in love with Mary; quitted Harriet; offered his heart-homage to Mary, either soon before or soon after the separation, and received an immediate and cordial response; made such arrangements for the well-being of Harriet as his circumstances allowed; and started for a continental trip, with Mary and Miss Clairmont (a daughter of the second Mrs. Godwin by her previous marriage) on the 28th of July. Poor Harriet, who had behaved well to Shelley according to her lights and opportunities, was much to be pitied, and as yet, so far as any published facts attest, in no way pointedly to be blamed. She returned to her father, now at Bath, and soon gave birth to a son, Charles Bysshe, who died in 1826. Not to revert to a sorrowful subject, I will here at once add the little that remains to be said concerning Harriet, which is indeed both scanty and not very

distinctly defined. Not long after parting from Shelley she foun some other protector or protectors: and, in consequence of som untoward events arising from a connexion of this sort, sh drowned herself in the Serpentine on the 10th of November 181

Returning from Switzerland in September 1814, Shelley an Mary found themselves isolated and poor. In this latter respec the death of Sir Bysshe on the 6th of January 1815 brougl present and substantial relief: an arrangement being made wit Sir Timothy whereby Percy came into immediate possession o an allowance of £1000 a year, which, subject to an annua deduction of £200 or less consequent upon the Chancery pr ceedings soon to be mentioned, continued to be his income fo the residue of his life. He now settled at Bishopgate nea Windsor Forest, and wrote his first decidedly fine poem, *Alastor* In January 1816 Mary bore him a son, his favourite William who died in Rome in June 1819. A second child, Clara, die in Venice in 1818; the last, born in Florence in Novembe 1819, is the present Baronet, Sir Percy Florence Shelley.

In May 1816 Shelley, with Mary and Miss Clairmont, agai went abroad for a somewhat longer excursion, and stayed at o near Sécheron on the Lake of Geneva, where they mad acquaintance with Byron. He and Shelley prized each other poetic genius, and Byron had besides a deep personal regar for Shelley, whom he appreciated as the most high-minded disinterested, and consistent man within his cognizance. Shelle did not, and could not, say anything so heartily laudatory Byron; but he could sympathize with him in several things admire him deeply and self-obliviously in more, and serve hi with true friendliness under all conditions. In Switzerlan Mrs. Shelley began her renowned novel *Frankenstein*. It wa during this tour that Shelley, in a not over-wise spirit of defianc signed his name in the Album for visitors at the Chartreuse Montanvert, with the tag

Εἰμι φιλάνθρωπος δημωκράτικός τ' ἄθεος τε.

Shelley and Mary were back in England by September 1816, and had hardly fixed upon a residence at Great Marlow in Buckinghamshire when the news of Harriet's suicide startled them. The poet felt the shock deeply: it continued to intensify for a while, and up to the close of his life its impression remained potent. As already intimated, this mournful termination to Harriet's career was in no wise directly attributable to Shelley or his proceedings: it is moreover to some extent explicable, without supposing that the calamities of Harriet were really of a very overwhelming character, by the fact that, from early girlhood and on through the most prosperous days of her married life, she had had an avowed proclivity to suicide. The death of Harriet was soon followed by another blow to Shelley, perhaps still more keenly felt. Mr. Westbrook refused to deliver up to him the children, Ianthe and Charles, and filed a bill in Chancery to justify his resistance. He alleged that Shelley had deserted his wife, was an atheist, and intended to bring up the children in his own religious and social heterodoxies. In August 1817 Lord Chancellor Eldon delivered judgment, assigning to Mr. Westbrook the custody of the children, and their education to a clergyman of the Church of England, with an allowance to be paid by their father. The grounds on which his judgment proceeded were not strictly those of speculative opinion alleged against Shelley, but of moral conduct, in the affair of Harriet and Mary, consequent on and conformable to opinion.

Shelley had meanwhile, in December 1816, married Mary Godwin, and had taken up his residence at Marlow. Here he lived on a scale of considerable comfort, combined with profuse liberality to others. At the beginning of 1815 he had visited a London hospital, chiefly with a view of ministering to the poor on occasion: at Marlow he exerted himself incessantly in alleviating the distress, whether bodily or pecuniary, of the impoverished lacemakers and other sufferers in his vicinity.

His own health was precarious, and most alarming symptoms of consumption appeared more than once in these years, but finally ceased in 1818. His spasmodic and other ailments remained, and were torture enough. An attack of ophthalmia, which recurred at a later date, was also caught in 1817 in attending some of the poor. In this year Shelley saw a great deal of Leigh Hunt, and a very affectionate friendship reigned between them. At Hunt's house in Hampstead, the author of *Alastor* met Horatio Smith and Keats, and took more kindly to the latter than he found reciprocated.

The *Revolt of Islam*, at first named *Laon and Cythna*, was published in 1818, and confirmed beyond cavil, to discerning eyes, the lofty promise of *Alastor*. It had been preceded by a pamphlet, bearing the name of "The Hermit of Marlow" as author, on the subject of parliamentary reform. *Laon and Cythna* was a dainty dish to set before the British public; the two lovers who give the name to the poem were, in the first form of it, not lovers only but brother and sister as well. The publisher, Mr. Ollier, protested, and withheld the book after a very few copies had been issued: Shelley stuck to his text for a while: at last, outwearied or convinced, he gave in and introduced into the poem the few changes which have brought it to its present wholesomer complexion.

Considerations of health, and perhaps of money, now made Shelley turn longing eyes towards the Continent, especially towards Italy. On the 11th of March 1818 he left England with his wife and two children and Miss Clairmont; travelled straight to Milan; and was fated never to revisit his native country, nor even to quit Italian soil again. It cannot exactly be said that Shelley had a rooted intention of never returning to England—in some respects, indeed, he had a predilection for living there; but the probability is that, had his life been prolonged for several years, he might still have been most of a foreign resident. The main lines of his Italian flittings are

follows: 1818, Milan, Leghorn, the Bagni di Lucca, Venice and its neighbourhood, Rome, Naples; 1819, Rome again, the neighbourhood of Leghorn, Florence; 1820, Pisa, the Bagni di Pisa (or di San Giuliano), Leghorn; 1821, Pisa, and a visit to Byron at Ravenna; 1822, Pisa and Lerici.

The perturbed section of Shelley's life—a life marked by more than common peculiarity of adventure for a modern poet, and for one whose experiences were crowded into so few years—has now closed: the period of his great poetic productiveness, which had already commenced, continued increasingly. In 1818 finished *Rosalind and Helen*, a poem begun in England; in any respects graceful and moving, but on the whole the least bstantial of his mature compositions. The same year pro-ced *Julian and Maddalo;* an admirable masterpiece, and first longish work (if with some reluctance we exclude *astor* from such a category) in which we perceive Shelley to a richly endowed *artist*, not only capable of consummate rformance, but actually performing consummately through-t. This splendid poem was sent to London for publication, never appeared until after the author's death; a fate which hared with *Peter Bell the Third* and *The Witch of Atlas*, not speak of numerous briefer writings. *Prometheus Unbound*, greatest of all his works to my thinking, followed close n *Julian and Maddalo;* being begun about September 8, and finished in December 1819. To have written *Pro-heus Unbound* is to be one of the world's immortals; to written *The Cenci* is to rank among the Englishmen least nt from Shakespeare. This was the product of the summer ths of 1819. Shelley undertook the work under a strong lsion, yet without any confidence or experience of his ity as a dramatist. Having completed it, he was much on procuring its representation on the stage; and he l the tragedy, through his friend Thomas Love Peacock, management of Covent Garden, hoping more especially

to secure Miss O'Neill for the heroine,—but the unnatural horror of the subject precluded even the suggestion of the part to that distinguished actress, and the whole project fell through. *Peter Bell the Third* belongs to the autumn of the same prolific year, 1819; a piece of supernal grotesque far too little remarked by ordinary Shelleyan readers—as airy, ringing, and catching as if we heard Momus laughing behind the low horizon-clouds. The *Witch of Atlas*, unsurpassed even by Shelley himself as a piece of imaginative fancy and of execution, was the work of three days of August 1820, succeeding an ascent of Mon San Pellegrino near the Bagni di Pisa. In the same month began *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, moved thereto by the grunting pigs at a fair which accompanied in unelucidative chorus reading aloud of one of his loftiest poems. It was publis in due course, but forthwith extinguished by a threat from Society for the Suppression of Vice. The remaining three wo *Epipsychidion*, *Adonais*, and *Hellas*, bring us into closer cont with the incidents or associations of Shelley's own life. *E psychidion* (of which a small edition was published, and also, some reason or other, afterwards withdrawn) is the result of poet's introduction to the Contessina Emilia Viviani, a be ful and impassioned young lady who had been shut up some years in the Convent of St. Anne in Pisa, pending father's selection of an appropriate husband for her. She sympathized with and indeed loved her intensely, though in such a sense as to cause or justify any scandal. At last beautiful young creature was married to an elderly man, w after a few years, she left with the approbation of her fa some while after Shelley's death, she died of a con tive malady. *Adonais* is the record of the generous ad tion of Shelley for his illustrious brother poet-Keats, wh expired in Rome on the 23rd of February 1821; the also, it must be said, of a baseless supposition, on the Shelley himself and of others at the time—that the au

Endymion had been brought to his grave by a severe criticism of that poem published in the *Quarterly Review*. *Hellas*, written in the autumn of 1821, shows the enthusiasm with which the poet watched the progress of the revolution then raging with various successes in Greece. Prince Alexander Mavrocordato, to whom the drama is dedicated, was one of his intimates in Pisa.

In this city the Shelleys (Miss Clairmont remained behind Florence) saw, for the first time in Italy, a good deal of iety. Byron settled in Pisa at the close of 1821, being now nesticated with the Countess Guiccioli, and thus bringing lley into the circle of her relatives the Counts Gamba; his nd cousin and eventual biographer Medwin was there from to time, and introduced him to Lieutenant and Mrs. ams, a young couple from India, whom Shelley grew mely fond of—saying indeed that Jane (Mrs. Williams) was ealization of his idea of the Lady in the *Sensitive Plant*. e very beginning of 1822 the Williamses brought Shelley acted with Captain Trelawny, the hero of a most adventurous e already, and of remarkable experiences afterwards.

rd Byron, whom Shelley had visited at Ravenna in the ner of 1821, proposed (as we have already seen in the moir of his lordship) that a quarterly magazine should be ted in which himself, Shelley, and Leigh Hunt, should ish all their ensuing original works, and share the profits. y, who more especially championed the interests of Hunt matter, was resolved to have as little as possible to do e project individually, not wishing either to compromise or to hamper himself. Hunt eventually acceded to the , and, after many delays, was on his way to Italy.

e 26th of April 1822 the Shelleys and Williamses left spend the summer on the Genoese coast, between the f Lerici and San Terenzo: they had taken a house he seashore, named the Casa Magni, and lived there

together. It was a singularly sultry summer, and a very wild secluded neighbourhood. Shelley, always passionately fond of boating, and Williams, who shared the same taste, had agreed to be joint owners of a small schooner for which Williams supplied a somewhat hazardous model: she was built at Genoa and named the *Don Juan*, and reached the Casa Magni on the 12th of May. Shelley was now engaged in composing his *Triumph of Life*—too soon to be triumphed over by death—which he had taken up after hammering away for a while upon the drama of *Charles the First*.

Leigh Hunt reached Genoa in June, and went on to Legh Shelley and Williams followed him thither in the *Don J* and saw him housed in Pisa. Circumstances were now u Byron to quit this part of Italy, and Shelley found much for anxiety in the uncertain prospects thus threatened to Further dejected by a desponding letter which he received his wife, now in a delicate state of health, he set sail on the noon of the 8th of July, to return from Leghorn to Lerici. a day of dull and menacing heat. About half-past six a burst, and the *Don Juan* sank in from ten to fifteen f water. Shelley could never be taught to swim: he thrust into his breast-pocket the last volume of Keats which h reading, and went down. Williams made an attempt to sw but he also, along with the only other soul on board, a s boy named Charles Vivian, perished. After days of harro suspense the corpses were all traced out by Trelawny, and of Williams and Shelley were burned on the seashore a ancient fashion, on the 15th and 16th of August. Th of the glorious poet were afterwards deposited in the Pr Cemetery in Rome.

It is still a question whether Shelley died by the sto being run down by a felucca, one of the Italian fishing and, if the latter, whether the running-down was an or a crime. The chief points of evidence deserving

tion are the following. On the 9th of July, the day after his death, an English-made oar, believed to have come out of his schooner, was noticed in one of the Italian boats at Leghorn. The body of Williams, with its scanty residue of clothing, was found in such a condition as to impress Trelawny with the idea that it "might have been plundered"—after being cast ashore, or, as we might equally conjecture, before that event. In September the schooner was dragged for and recovered. Captain Roberts, the naval officer who had seen to her being built, now examined her carefully, and came to the conclusion, at first that she had been swamped in a heavy sea, but afterwards that she had been run down by a felucca. Some suspicion of foul play arose at once: it was surmised (as recorded by Leigh Hunt, and, at a later date, by his son who was also on the spot[1]) that a native boat had attempted to board her piratically, tempted by a sum of money in dollars that she carried. Any suspicion of this kind, however, remaining unconfirmed, died out: only lately, in November 1875, was it revived by a letter addressed from Rome by Miss Trelawny to her father, stating that a sailor had (as reported) recently died at Leghorn, and had confessed on his deathbed[2] that he had been one of the

[1] Mr. Thornton Hunt, who (in a note to his father's *Autobiography*) writes as follows:—"A story was current in Leghorn which conjecturally helped to explain the shipwreck of Shelley's boat. It went out to sea in rough weather, and *yet* was followed by a native boat. When Shelley's yacht was raised, a large hole was found stove in the stern. Shelley had on board a sum of money in dollars; and the supposition is that the men in the other boat had tried to board Shelley's piratically, but had desisted because the collision caused the English boat to sink; and they abandoned it because the men saved would have become their accusers. The only facts in support of this conjectural story are the alleged following of the native boat, and the damage to the stern of Shelley's boat, otherwise not very accountable."

[2] The story comes to us from (1) Miss Trelawny, who had it from (2) her friends "the K—s," who had it from (3) an intimate of theirs at Spezia, who is understood to know and to have received it from (4) the priest who confessed (5) the dying malefactor, and was asked by him to make the confession public.

crew that ran down the boat containing Shelley and Williams. This crime had been perpetrated under the impression that Byron was on board with a large amount of money. "They did not intend" (these are Miss Trelawny's words) "to sink the boat, but to board her and murder Byron. She sank, he said, as soon as she was struck." Trelawny—and this is perhaps the most important point of all, considering how highly capable he is of estimating the facts and the probabilities of the case—believes the rumoured confession of the sailor to be probably true. "This account," he wrote to me, "so exactly corresponds with the event that I think it solves that which for half a century has been a mystery to me and others." Notwithstanding all this, we are as yet—in the absence of further corroboration of the report—permitted to believe that Shelley may have died by the blind decree and all-compensating equity of Nature—cruel, awful, arbitrary, unfathomed, unappealable—rather than by the ignoble and unfraternal hand of man—he the brother of all mankind.

Shelley was nearly 5 feet 11 in height, strong, slim, with something of a stoop. His hair was abundant and wavy, dark-brown which began early to grizzle; his eyes deep-blue; his countenance uncommonly juvenile,—full of spirituality, and of the beauty which goes along with that, though he was not of the type of a regularly "handsome man." He was generosity, unworldliness, and disinterestedness, personified; of the most sensitive emotions and affections; and inspired by a boundless philanthropy. Physical and moral courage were equally his, along with an innate impulse to resist all dictatorial authority in social, political, and more especially speculative matters. No man was more singleminded, none a more ardent lover of abstract truth and ideal virtue. His career corresponded with great exactitude to his principles; and, though there are some passages in it to be deplored even from his own point of view, and to be condemned from others, few men could challenge a

clearer verdict for an exalted, pure, and transcendent nature.

A great deal has been said about Shelley's atheism and materialism by people who had neither his power or elevation of mind for approaching these abstruse subjects, nor his spirit of ardent investigation for exploring them, nor his courage and openness for declaring the results, as he apprehended them, of the exploration. Far be it from me to truckle to any clamour on such a theme, or to intrude any irrelevances of opinion, my own or others': the only opinion here to be ascertained, be it right or wrong, is Shelley's. The fact, then, seems to be that, in his early youth, he was a sceptic on all sorts of religious subjects; next, a materialist and atheist, in the mode of French philosophy; afterwards, in his maturer years, or from about 1815–16, mainly a Berkeleyan or Immaterialist, and, along with this, something of a pantheist rather than atheist. But he did not affect certainty where he found mystery; and to the end of his life it would seemingly have been difficult to him to define what precise sort of pantheism or theism he contemplated as consistent with the facts of Nature—or what degree of hold over his belief the ordinary or the more esoteric doctrines of the immortality of the soul had acquired. In politics he was genuinely a republican; but not a courtier of the mob, nor at all disposed to ignore the practical difficulties which would beset a transfer of power from the few to the many, prior to full preparation of the many to use it with justice and understanding.

The poetry of Shelley is in domain supreme, and in beauty supreme. Its paramount quality is the ideal: through the husks of all things he penetrated into their soul, and saw this soul in the garb of beauty. It might have been said of Shelley as of his own skylark,

> "And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest."

The poetic ecstacy took him constantly upwards; and, the higher he got, the more thoroughly did his thoughts and words

become one exquisite and intense unit. With elevation of meaning, and splendour and beauty of perception, he combined the most searching, the most inimitable loveliness of verse-music; and he stands at this day, and perhaps will always remain, the poet who, by instinct of verbal selection and charm of sound, comes nearest to expressing the half-inexpressible—the secret things of beauty, the intolerable light of the arcane.

Besides this unparagoned merit, Shelley is admirably great in the poetic-familiar, as in *Julian and Maddalo*; the tragic, as in *The Cenci*; the fantastic-grotesque, as in *Peter Bell the Third*; and in poetic translation generally. He is therefore very far indeed from being (as the popular notion tends too much to supposing) a mere vague idealist who is pretty nearly at the end of his tether when he has no metaphysical abstractions to talk about, no anti-actual impersonations to present, and no indeterminate magnitudes of the natural world to spatiate in. Not the less true is it that Shelley is often too shadowy in thought and phrase, and hence indifferently qualified for narrative work, and too ready to lose himself in the fascinations rather than to follow out the structural contours of his subjects. He is also, from first to last, a somewhat loose and haphazard *writer*, considered strictly as such, apart from the impulses of poetic genius. He comes right continually through instinct and power: if he does not thus come right, neither does he keep himself right through heedfulness, or the resolute will for artistic perfection. And yet he is among the most perfect, the most unspeakable, of artists.

To sum up, there is no poet—and no man either—in whose behalf it is more befitting for all natures, and for some natures more inevitable, to feel the privileges and the delights of enthusiasm. The very soul rushes out towards Shelley as an unapproached poet, and embraces him as a dearest friend.

POET BORN BETWEEN SHELLEY AND MRS. HEMANS.

JOHN CLARE .... 1793 to 1864.

FELICIA DOROTHEA HEMANS.

SENTIMENT without passion, and suffering without abjection, along with a deep religious sense, and with the gifts of a brilliant mind taking the poetical direction through eager sympathy and some genuine vocation, constitute the life of Mrs. Hemans.[1] Whatever may be the deservings of the poems in other respects, they do not fail to convey to the reader a certain impression of beauty, felt to be inherent as much in the personality of the authoress as in her writings: they show as being the outcome of a beautiful life, and in fact they are so. The impression which the reader will thus have received from perusing the poems is not only confirmed but intensified when he knows the events of the writer's life.

Felicia Dorothea Browne, born in Duke Street, Liverpool, on the 25th of September 1793, was daughter of a merchant of considerable eminence, a native of Ireland, belonging to a branch of the Sligo family. Her mother, whose maiden name was Wagner, was partly Italian and partly German by extraction, her father having held the post of Consul at Liverpool for the

[1] The Memoir of Mrs. Hemans, written by her sister Mrs. Hughes, and prefixed to the edition of the Poems in 7 vols. published by Messrs. Blackwood, is the best authority for the facts of the poetess's life. There are also the *Memorials* by Mr. Chorley in 2 vols., containing a good deal of Mrs. Hemans's correspondence (reproduced to a large extent by Mrs. Hughes), and mostly bearing on her literary career rather than the circumstances of her private life. The former of these accounts is pleasantly written, in a tone of deep affection, and admiration as well, at which the reader will not be disposed to cavil.

Austrian and Tuscan Governments. The surname Wagner was in reality a corruption from the illustrious Venetian name Venier, borne by three Doges, and by the commander of the fleet of the Republic at the great battle of Lepanto. Felicia was the fifth child in a family of seven, of whom one died in infancy; she was distinguished, almost from her cradle, by extreme beauty and precocious talents. "The full glow of that radiant beauty which was destined to fade so early" is one of the expressions used by the poetess's sister in describing the former at the age of fifteen. This reference to "early fading" appears to be intended to apply rather to the death of Mrs. Hemans when only in her forty-second year, and to the ravages of disease in the few years preceding, than to any loss of comeliness in mature womanhood. An engraved portrait of her by the American artist William E. West, one of three which he painted in 1827, shows us that Mrs. Hemans, at the age of thirty-four, was eminently pleasing and good-looking, with an air of amiability and sprightly gentleness, and of confiding candour which, while none the less perfectly womanly, might almost be termed childlike in its limpid depth. The features are correct and harmonious; the eyes full; the contour amply and elegantly rounded. In height she was neither tall nor short. A sufficient wealth of naturally clustering hair, golden in early youth, but by this time of a rich auburn, shades the capacious but not over-developed forehead, and the lightly pencilled eyebrows. The bust and form have the fullness of a mature period of life; and it would appear that Mrs. Hemans' was somewhat short-necked and high-shouldered, partly detracting from delicacy of proportion, and of general aspect or impression on the eye. We would rather judge of her by this portrait (which her sister pronounces a good likeness) than by another engraved in Mr. Chorley's *Memorials*. This latter was executed in Dublin in 1831 by a young artist named Edward Robinson. It makes Mrs. Hemans look younger than in the

earlier portrait by West, and may on that ground alone be surmised unfaithful; and, though younger, it also makes her heavier and less refined.

The childhood of Felicia Browne was probably rendered all the happier by a commercial reverse which befell her father before she was seven years of age. The family hereupon removed to Wales, and for nine years they lived at Gwrych [1] near Abergele in Denbighshire, close to the sea and amid mountains. This was the very scene for the poetically-minded child to enjoy, and to have her powers nurtured by: a great love of Nature, and in particular an affectionate delight in Wales, its people and associations, constantly traceable in her writings, followed as an almost necessary consequence. Her mother, an amiable and excellent woman, fully qualified to carry on her daughter's education, devoted the most careful attention to this object, and was repaid by an unswerving depth and constancy of love. A large library was kept in the house, and Felicia drew heavily upon its stores: a pretty picture is presented to the mind's eye, and would be not unworthy of realization by art, in the anecdote that it was her habit, at the age of six, to read Shakespeare while seated in the branches of an apple-tree. Along with great rapidity of comprehension, she had a memory of surprising retentiveness, and would repeat whole pages of poetry after a single reading. At the age of about eleven she passed a winter in London, and was there again in the following year—never afterwards.

In 1808—age fourteen—Felicia first appears as an authoress. She published a volume of poems which got abused in some review: this was the only time that really harsh criticism befell her. The mishap so far affected the impressionable damsel as to keep her in bed some days: but she surmounted it pretty soon, and resumed writing. In the same year she wrote a poem named *England and Spain;* being then under the in-

[1] So spelled by Mrs. Hughes: "Grwych" by Mr. Chorley.

fluence of military enthusiasm arising from the events of the Peninsular War, in which one of her brothers was serving: another of them was also in the army, and in the same regiment, the 23rd Royal Welsh Fusiliers. The next year was a momentous one in the life of Felicia Browne. She met Captain Hemans, of the 4th (or King's Own) Regiment, an officer not rich in purse, but having advantages, as we are informed, both of person and education: he professed admiration of the bewitching girl, and she gave him her love. He shortly had to return to Spain; and nearly three years elapsed before they again met. Meanwhile, in 1809, the Browne family removed to Bronwylfa, near St. Asaph in Flintshire; and in 1812, for the second and last time, appeared a volume of poetry bearing the name of Felicia Dorothea Browne, *The Domestic Affections, and Other Poems.* In the summer of 1812 she married the man of her choice.

Biographers have not permitted us to know distinctly whether or not the conjugal life of Mrs. Hemans was happy, or what Captain Hemans might possibly have found to say on the subject: at any rate, it was a short one, practically speaking. The wedded couple resided at first at Daventry in Northamptonshire, where the Captain was Adjutant to the County Militia: here they remained about a year, and here was born their son Arthur, the first of a family of five, all of whom were boys. They then went to live with Mrs. Hemans's own family at Bronwylfa; her mother was now at the head of the house, as her father, having resumed the mercantile career, had gone out to Quebec, where finally he died. In 1818 Captain Hemans resolved to go to the south of Europe "for the sake of his health"—a very inconvenient motive, or a highly convenient one, according to circumstances: he had suffered much from the vicissitudes of a military life, especially during the retreat to Corunna, and afterwards through fever caught in the Walcheren expedition. He departed just before the birth of his fifth son: went to

Rome; and there settled down. The parting proved to be a final one. It might have been fancied that even the shattered frame of a young officer who had survived Corunna and Walcheren would suffice for the effort of coming to Wales, England, or Ireland, at some time between 1818 and 1835, so as to rebehold a wife whom he had left in the bloom of youth and loveliness, and whose literary fame, for many years succeeding his departure, lent an ever-brightening lustre to the name of Hemans, and so as to get a glimpse of his promising boys. But this was not to be: for some reason or other, not defined to us, even the charms of Bronwylfa, with a wife, five sons and a resident mother-in-law, did not relax the tenacious grasp which Italy and Rome obtained on Captain Hemans. Or again it might have seemed conceivable that not only Captain Hemans but also his wife, the author of *Lays of Many Lands*, sensitive to the historic and romantic associations of such a country as Italy, would find it compatible with liking as well as duty to pay a visit to Rome, or possibly to make it a permanent dwelling-place. As to this, it may perhaps be inferred, in a general way, that the family affections of daughter and mother were more dominant and vivid in Mrs. Hemans than conjugal love: her intense feeling of the sacredness of home, which it would be both idle and perverse to contest, may have set before her, as more binding and imperative, the duties of service to her own mother, and of guidance to her own children, than the more equal, passionate, and in some sense self-indulgent relation between wife and husband. However, abandoning conjecture, it may be best here to transcribe the reticent hints on the subject which are given by the poetess's sister Mrs. Hughes, in her Memoir, and which show that the *de facto* separation between Captain and Mrs. Hemans depended partly upon considerations of family obligation, and partly upon special circumstances not clearly indicated, but apparently reflecting more or less on the marital deportment of the Captain.

"It has been alleged, and with perfect truth, that the literary pursuits of Mrs. Hemans, and the education of her children, made it more eligible for her to remain under the maternal roof than to accompany her husband to Italy. It is however unfortunately but too well known that such were not the only reasons which led to this divided course. To dwell on this subject would be unnecessarily painful; yet it must be stated that nothing like a permanent separation was contemplated at the time, nor did it ever amount to more than a tacit conventional arrangement which offered no obstacle to the frequent interchange of correspondence, nor to a constant reference to their father in all things relating to the disposal of her boys. But years rolled on—seventeen years of absence, and consequently alienation: and, from this time to the hour of her death, Mrs. Hemans and her husband never met again."

With this incident of the life-long separation between her husband and herself, anything of a romantic character in the occurrences of Mrs. Hemans's career terminates; although the colouring of high-toned romance in her mind and writings never died out, but to the last continued to permeate, enliven, and beautify, that other element and staple of her life, its sweet and earnest domesticity. Now we have only to contemplate the loving daughter, glad, as long as fate permitted, to escape being the head of the household, although invested with the matronly dignity proper to the motherhood of five boys. We see in her the not less deeply affectionate, tender, and vigilant mother; the admired and popular poetess, distinguished and soon burdened by applause; shortly afterwards the cureless invalid, marked out for an early death, towards which she progresses with a lingering but undeviating rapidity—calm in conscience, bright and cheerful in mind, full of faith and hope for eternity, and of the gentlest charities of life for her brief residue of time.

In 1818, before the departure of her husband, Mrs. Hemans

had published a volume of poetical Translations; and about the same time she wrote *The Restoration of the Works of Art to Italy*, and *Modern Greece*, and other poems which were afterwards included in the series named *Tales and Historic Scenes*. In 1820 she brought out *The Sceptic*: a mild performance which some still milder-minded disbeliever found of convincing efficacy, assuring Mrs. Hemans, in a personal interview not long before her death, that it had wrought his conversion to the christian religion. In the same year she made the acquaintance of the Rev. Reginald (afterwards Bishop) Heber, then rector of Hodnet—the first eminent literary personage whom she knew well. He encouraged her in the composition of another poem destined to extirpate religious error, entitled *Superstition and Revelation*: it had been begun some while before this, and was never distinctly abandoned, but remained uncompleted. Towards this time also Mrs. Hemans wrote a set of papers in the *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine* on Foreign Literature; almost the only prose that she ever published, and serving chiefly as a vehicle for poetic translations. She obtained two literary prizes for poems, and her ambition was equal to the composition of a five-act tragedy intended for stage representation—*The Vespers of Palermo*. This was a work that occupied some time. At last, after she had received £210 for the copyright of the tragedy, it was produced at Covent Garden Theatre on the 12th of December 1823. No doubt the authoress's own hopes were not altogether low as to the success of the piece, and her friends were in high expectancy. Young and Charles Kemble took the principal male characters: Miss Kelly appeared as Constance. The acting of this lady is said, fairly or unfairly, to have been disastrous to the piece: it proved "all but a failure," and was withdrawn after the opening night, and never reproduced in London. Not long afterwards, however, the tragedy was acted in Edinburgh, and with a considerable measure of success. A dispassionate reader of the present day—if indeed there exists

a reader of *The Vespers of Palermo*—will probably opine that the London audience showed at least as much discrimination (apart from any question as to demerit in Miss Kelly) as that in Edinburgh. Mrs. Hemans's talent was not of the dramatic kind. Perhaps there never yet was a good five-act stage-tragedy written by a woman ; and certainly the peculiar tone and tint of Mrs. Hemans's faculty were not such as to supply the deficiency which she, merely as a woman, was almost certain to evince. Even as a narrative poet, not to speak of the drama, she shows to no sort of advantage : her personages not having anything of a *full-bodied* character, but wavering between the romantically criminal and the longwindedly virtuous—poor supposititious creatures, inflated and diluted. Something better may nevertheless be said for the second of her tragedies, *The Siege of Valencia*, published in 1823 along with *Belshazzar's Feast* and some other poems. This play appears to have been written without any view to the stage : a condition of writing which acts detrimentally upon a drama composed by a born dramatist, but which may rather have the opposite effect upon one coming from a different sort of author. In *The Siege of Valencia* the situation is in a high degree tragical—even terrible or harrowing : and there is this advantage—no small one in the case of a writer such as Mrs. Hemans—that, while the framework is historical, and the crisis and passions of a genuinely heroic type, the immediate interest is personal or domestic. Mrs. Hemans may be credited with a good and unhacknied choice of subject in this drama, and with a well-concerted adaptation of it to her own more special powers : the writing is fairly sustained throughout, and there are passages both vigorous and moving. As the reader approaches the *dénouement*, and finds the authoress dealing death with an unsparing hand to the heroically patriotic Gonzalez and all his offspring, he may perhaps at first feel a little ruffled at noting that the only member of the family who has been found wanting

in the fiery trial—wanting through an excess of maternal love—is also the only one saved alive: but in this too the authoress may be pronounced in the right. Reunion with her beloved ones in death would in fact have been mercy to Elmina, and would have left her undistinguished from the others, and untouched by any retribution: survival, mourning, and self-discipline, are the only chastisement in which a poetic justice, in its higher conception, could be expressed.—Besides the two dramas of *The Vespers of Palermo* and *The Siege of Valencia*, Mrs. Hemans began likewise two others—*De Châtillon, or the Crusaders*, and *Sebastian of Portugal:* neither of these was finished.

Soon before the production of *The Vespers of Palermo* on the stage, she had taken up with great zest the study of the German language; and her *Lays of Many Lands*, published in 1826, were to a considerable extent suggested by Herder's work, *Stimmen der Völker in Lieder.* The same volume contained her poem of *The Forest Sanctuary*, which had occupied her in the latter part of 1824 and commencement of 1825: this she was disposed to regard as her finest work. It is the most important of her narrative or semi-narrative poems, and, as compared with the others of that class, may reasonably claim a preference, without our committing ourselves to any very high eulogium upon it. The *Records of Woman* followed in 1828, being the first of the authoress's works that Messrs. Blackwood published: into this series she put more of her personal feeling than into any of the others. In the summer of 1830 appeared the *Songs of the Affections*, being the last of her publications prior to her departure for Ireland.

Meanwhile the course of her private life had been marked only by such variations as removal of residence, and by one deep and irreparable affliction in the death of her beloved mother on the 11th of January 1827, followed soon afterwards by the failure of her own health. The first removal, in the

Spring of 1825, had been from Bronwylfa to Rhyllon, a house distant from the former only about a quarter of a mile: here she settled along with her mother, sister, and four boys—the eldest son being then at a school at Bangor. For a time also her second brother, Major Browne, afterwards Commissioner of Police in Dublin, and his wife, resided in the same house, on their return from Canada. Rhyllon, though with attractive surroundings, was a much less picturesque house than Bronwylfa; but this brief period of Mrs. Hemans's life proved to be probably the happiest that she had passed since childhood. Besides many sources of tranquil domestic satisfaction, and for a while a somewhat firmer condition of her own health, she was in the enjoyment of a considerable reputation not now confined to her native country, for the fame of her poems had spread to America, and flourished there with extraordinary vigour. She was at one time invited to emigrate to Boston, and there conduct a periodical under an arrangement which would have secured her an income. Her literary correspondence became very large; and gradually the urgencies of editors of annuals, owners of albums, and other such predaceous assailants of leisure and patience, besieged and waylaid her to a burdensome and harrassing extent. In the summer of 1828 she paid a visit to some friends at Wavertree Lodge, near Liverpool. Her health was now exceedingly frail, with palpitation of the heart, and inflammatory and other distressing symptoms, frequently aggravated by her exceeding carelessness in all matters affecting herself. Her friends induced her to take medical advice, and she was directed to assume a reclining posture as often as practicable. Another consequence of this visit was her resolution to move to the village of Wavertree, chiefly with a view to the better education of her three younger boys: the two others, at the same time that their mother quitted Wales in the autumn, went away to Rome, to the care of their father. Mrs. Hemans's sister had married, her brother was appointed to a post in

Ireland, and the cherished Welsh home was thus irremediably broken up. The residence at Wavertree, however, turned out unsatisfactory: Mrs. Hemans did not find it healthy for herself, nor its educational advantages equal to her expectation. She had some friends in Liverpool whom she liked, more especially the Chorley family, but for the most part was oppressed by the importunities of undiscerning and uncongenial neighbours, upon whom moreover she often failed even to produce a favourable impression. She was regarded as odd—"wore a veil on her head, like no one else" (as is shown indeed in Mr. West's portrait of her): and she, for her part, could hardly be induced to go into any general society, and would fain have got a friend "to procure her a dragon to be kept in her court-yard," as a protection against intruders. Her house was itself very small, and on her arrival comfortless: but she managed to make it comparatively elegant. She now conceived a great passion for music, and, in the winter of 1830 and ensuing Spring, applied herself to the study of the art under Zeugheer Herrmann, receiving also some assistance from a well-known amateur, Mr. Lodge. She so far cultivated her faculty in music as to be able to invent airs for some of her own lyrics. Playing on the harp and the pianoforte had been among her earlier accomplishments: and her voice was naturally good, but failed in youth, owing to the weakness of her chest.

The residence at Wavertree was varied by excursions to Scotland and to the Lake country. In July 1829 she paid a visit to Mr. Hamilton, the author of *Cyril Thornton*, at Chiefswood, near Abbotsford, and saw a great deal of Sir Walter Scott. Two of his kindly compliments to Mrs. Hemans have been preserved in her sister's record. "I should say you had too many gifts, Mrs. Hemans, were they not all made to give pleasure to those around you": and afterwards at leave-taking, "There are some whom we meet, and should like ever after to claim as kith and kin; and you are one of those." The Scotch

trip included visits to Yarrow, Abbotsford, and Edinburgh, and sitting for a bust to Mr. Angus Fletcher. The excursion to the Lakes of Westmoreland took place in the following year, 1830: the poetess went to Wordsworth's house, Rydal Mount, with her son Charles;[1] and, on afterwards moving to a neighbouring cottage named Dove's Nest, overlooking Winandermere, was joined by her two other boys from Wavertree. Mrs. Hemans's letters show how much she liked Wordsworth, both poetically and personally: she found him more impulsive than she had expected, and greatly enjoyed his fine reading, and the frequent touches of poetry in his talk. Nor was her admiration unresponded to, as proved by the lines which Wordsworth devoted to her memory but a few years afterwards—

"Mourn rather for that holy spirit
Sweet as the Spring, as ocean deep;
For her who, ere her summer faded,
Has sunk into a breathless sleep."

She left Dove's Nest towards the middle of August, and revisited Scotland, and then re-entered Wales by way of Dublin and Holyhead.

As the experiment of Wavertree had proved disappointing, and as her brother Major Browne was now settled in Ireland, Mrs. Hemans determined to take up her residence in Dublin from the following Spring. In the late autumn of 1830 therefore she saw her last of Bronwylfa, and towards the close of April 1831 she quitted Wavertree and England, never (as it was fated) to return. She passed a few weeks in Dublin; then stayed at her brother's house, the Hermitage, near Kilkenny; and in the early autumn was finally domiciled in the Irish capital. At first she dwelt in Upper Pembroke Street; afterwards at No. 36 Stephen's Green; and thirdly at a house which proved more comfortable, and in which her life came to

[1] Charles Hemans settled eventually in Italy, became in a high degree distinguished as an archæological writer, and died in October 1876.

a close, 20 Dawson Street. In Dublin, as before at Wavertree, Mrs. Hemans lived retired from society, but in familiar intercourse with a few sterling friends, among whom were Sir William Rowan Hamilton, Archbishop and Mrs. Whately, and the Rev. Blanco White. Her health was in a very shattered state, the palpitation of the heart continuing, and being attended by frequent fainting-fits. Every now and then, however, she rallied, and it was still possible for her friends to flatter their hearts with hope; and the gentle sweetness and even playfulness of her temper, mingled with tender sentiment and ever-deepening religious impressions, never failed her. She had now to pass a great part of her time lying on a sofa.

After her settlement in Ireland Mrs. Hemans published the following volumes of poetry—her prevailing tendency being at this period towards themes of a religious character. Early in 1834, the *Hymns for Childhood* were first issued from the Home Press, in Dublin,—having previously, however, as far back as 1824, appeared in an American edition. The *National Lyrics* were collected, and produced by the same Dublin publishers, almost simultaneously with the *Hymns for Childhood;* and were succeeded, at no long interval, by the *Scenes and Hymns of Life*, which volume obtained much applause. This was the last publication during her lifetime. She afterwards wrote *Despondency and Aspiration*, and dictated the series of sonnets named *Thoughts during Sickness:* the last composition of all was the *Sabbath Sonnet*, produced on the 26th of April, only twenty days prior to her death.

The other events of the last two years of Mrs. Hemans's life may be very briefly summarized: fatal illness, and the attentions of relatives and friends, are nearly all that the record includes. Not only her brother and his wife, but also her sister Mrs. Hughes, with the husband of the latter, were with her with more or less continuity. In May 1833 her son

Claude went to America, to engage in commercial life ; another son, Willoughby, was employed on the Ordnance Survey in the north of Ireland : Charles, and during his holidays Henry, tended her affectionately. The latter, shortly before his mother's death, was unexpectedly appointed to a clerkship in the Admiralty by Sir Robert Peel, who added "a most munificent donation." In July 1834 Mrs. Hemans caught a fever : she went to the county of Wicklow for the sake of her health, but here another illness, scarlet fever, assailed her. Returning to Dublin, and being ordered to pass as much time as possible in the open air, she caught a cold, through having sat out too long reading in the gardens of the Dublin Society, where an autumnal fog overtook her : the cold was followed by ague, and this, with a hectic fever which supervened, may be regarded as the final stage in her disease, now mainly of a dropsical character. At the beginning of March 1835, after spending some while at Redesdale, the seat of her attached friends the Whatelys, she returned to Dublin, having almost lost the use of her limbs ; and on the 16th of May, without a sigh or movement, she ceased to live. She lies buried in St. Anne's Church, Dublin.

Mrs. Hemans, while sprightly, versatile, and conversible, was not the less of a very retiring disposition, shrinking from self-display, and the commonplaces of a public reputation. Her character was extremely guileless. Notwithstanding her exceeding sensitiveness—which extended not only to the affections and interests of life, but to such outer matters as the sound of the wind at night, the melancholy of the seashore, and in especial (though there was no reason for this in any personal occurrences) to the sadness of burials at sea—she was yet very free from mere ordinary nervous alarms. "My spirits," she once wrote, "are as variable as the lights and shadows now flitting with the wind over the high grass, and sometimes the tears gush into my eyes when I can scarcely

define the cause. I put myself in mind of an Irish melody sometimes, with its quick and wild transitions from sadness to gaiety." Her conversation was various and brilliant, with a total freedom from literary pretence. She had a strong perception of the ludicrous, but abstained from sarcasm or ill-nature, more especially as weapons against any who had injured or neglected her; and personal or invidious literary gossip was her aversion. She would not permit herself to be vexed at small things, but was wont to quote the saying of Madame L'Espinasse (applying it no doubt chiefly to the severance of her matrimonial ties), "*Un grand chagrin tue tout le reste.*" She had a keen dislike to any sort of coarseness in conversation or in books, and would often tear out peccant pages from volumes in her possession. Her accomplishments were considerable, and not merely superficial. She knew French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and in mature life German, and was not unacquainted with Latin. She had some taste and facility not only in music (as already referred to) but likewise in drawing; and some of her sketches of localities have served for vignettes in the copyright edition of her complete works. Wordsworth has amusingly (but it is said not accurately) written that "she was totally ignorant of housewifery, and could as easily have managed the spear of Minerva as her needle." Her poetry was often written with a readiness approaching improvisation: this she felt as in some degree a blemish, and towards the close of her life she regretted having often had to write in a haphazard way, so as to supply means for the education of her sons. Byron, Shelley, and Madame de Staël, were among the writers she was in the habit of quoting. Jealousy of contemporary female writers, prominent in the public eye, was unknown to her gentle and true-hearted nature: Miss Jewsbury (afterwards Mrs. Fletcher) was among her intimates, and she indulged herself in friendly correspondence with Miss Baillie, Miss Mitford, Mrs. Howitt, and others. The first-named of these ladies,

Mrs. Fletcher (whose death preceded that of her friend by about a year), has, in her book named *The Three Histories*, described Mrs. Hemans under the name of Egeria; and, as the faithfulness of the portrait, allowing for some degree of idealization, is attested by Mrs. Hughes, I am induced to repeat it here:—"Egeria was totally different from any other woman I had ever seen, either in Italy or England. She did not dazzle, she subdued me. Other women might be more commanding, more versatile, more acute: but I never saw one so exquisitely feminine. Her birth, her education, but above all the genius with which she was gifted, combined to inspire a passion for the etherial, the tender, the imaginative, the heroic—in one word, the beautiful. It was in her a faculty divine, and yet of daily life; it touched all things, but, like a sunbeam, touched them with a 'golden finger.' Anything abstract or scientific was unintelligible and distasteful to her. Her knowledge was extensive and various; but true to the first principle of her nature, it was poetry that she sought in history, scenery, character, and religious belief—poetry that guided all her studies, governed all her thoughts, coloured all her conversation. Her nature was at once simple and profound: there was no room in her mind for philosophy, nor in her heart for ambition; the one was filled by imagination, the other engrossed by tenderness. She had a passive temper, but decided tastes; any one might influence, but very few impressed her. Her strength and her weakness alike lay in her affections. These would sometimes make her weep at a word,—at others, imbue her with courage; so that she was alternately a 'falcon-hearted dove,' and 'a reed shaken with the wind.' Her voice was a sad sweet melody, and her spirits reminded me of an old poet's description of the orange-tree, with its

'Golden lamps hid in a night of green,'

or of those Spanish gardens where the pomegranate grows beside the cypress. Her gladness was like a burst of sunlight;

and, if in her depression she resembled night, it was night bearing her stars. I might describe and describe for ever, but I should never succeed in portraying Egeria. She was a Muse, a Grace, a variable child, a dependent woman, the Italy of human beings."

In Mrs. Hemans's poetry there is (as already observed) a large measure of beauty, and, along with this, very considerable skill. Aptitude and delicacy in versification, and a harmonious balance in the treatment of the subject, are very generally apparent: if we accept the key-note as right, we may with little misgiving acquiesce in what follows on to the close. Her skill, however, hardly rises into the loftier region of art: there is a gift, and culture added to the gift, but not a great native faculty working in splendid independence, or yet more splendid self-discipline. Her sources of inspiration being genuine, and the tone of her mind feminine in an intense degree, the product has no lack of sincerity: and yet it leaves a certain artificial impression, rather perhaps through a cloying flow of "right-minded" perceptions of moral and material beauty than through any other defect. "Balmy" it may be, but the atmosphere of her verse is by no means bracing. One might sum up the weak points in Mrs. Hemans's poetry by saying that it is not only "feminine" poetry (which under the circumstances can be no imputation, rather an encomium) but also "female" poetry: besides exhibiting the fineness and charm of womanhood, it has the monotone of mere sex. Mrs. Hemans has that love of good and that horror of evil which characterize a scrupulous female mind, and which we may most rightly praise without concluding that they favour poetical robustness, or even perfection in literary form. She is a leader in that very modern phalanx of poets who persistently coördinate the impulse of sentiment with the guiding power of morals or religion. Everything must convey its "lesson," and is indeed set forth for the sake of its lesson, but must at the same time

have the emotional gush of a spontaneous sentiment. The poet must not write because he has something of his own to say, but because he has something *right* to feel and say. Lamartine was a prophet in this line. After allowing all proper deductions, however, it may be gratefully acknowledged that Mrs. Hemans takes a very honourable rank among poetesses; and that there is in her writings much which both appeals, and deserves to appeal, to many gentle, sweet, pious, and refined souls, in virtue of its thorough possession of the same excellent gifts. According to the spiritual or emotional condition of those who peruse, it would be found that a poem by this authoress which to one reader would be graceful and tender would to another be touching, and to a third poignantly pathetic. The first we can suppose to be a man, and the third a woman; or the first a critic, the second a "poetical reader," and the third a sensitive nature attuned to sympathy by suffering.

JOHN KEATS.

JOHN KEATS was born, a seven-months child, on the 29th of October 1795, in Moorfields, London, at the house of his maternal grandfather, Mr. Jennings, who kept livery-stables. I hardly know why the biographer[1] of the poet should call this "the upper rank of the middle class," save as a concession to that deadly spirit of flunkeyism in the British people which, after doing its pitiful best to embitter Keats's life on the score of his unexalted origin, and after the nation had accepted him warmly at a later date as a poet of splendid and exquisite gifts, is still capable of wishing to suppose that he was more like a member of "the upper rank of the middle class" than what he really was—a member of a middling rank in the middle class. The father of the future poet, one of the *employés* of Mr. Jennings, died young in 1804, in consequence of a fall from his horse. The character of his widow is not very unambiguously defined: one statement is that she was passionately fond of amusement—another, that she was a person of saturnine demeanour. Whatever her idiosyncrasies, she had suffi-

[1] Lord Houghton, to whom all lovers of Keats are greatly indebted. For myself, it would be affectation and ingratitude to deny that my brief summary of the poet's life is to some extent an abbreviated recast of the shorter form of his lordship's memoir. Not indeed that I have followed him blindly, or neglected to consult other sources of information, especially the longer *Life of Keats* by the same author, founded partly on a narrative compiled by Mr. Armitage Brown. The remaining materials, supplementary to these, are extremely scanty: they have recently been rendered rather less so by the publication of the correspondence between Keats and Haydon, in the work *Benjamin Robert Haydon*, 1876, and by the letters of Keats (old and new intermingled) in the New York *World*, 1877.

cient good-sense and maternal solicitude to give her children a sound scholastic training.

It was at the school kept by Mr. Clarke, at Enfield, that John Keats received what have been termed "the elements of a liberal education." This included something of Latin, as for instance Vergil; but Keats had no instruction whatever in Greek while at school, nor indeed at any subsequent time. Mr. Charles Cowden Clarke, so well known as a Shakespearean scholar and industrious man of letters, was the son of the schoolmaster; and a very friendly acquaintance sprang up between him and Keats, and was maintained throughout their joint lives. Keats, as a boy, was resolute and ardent, and in equal measure placable; a temper out of which anything great could be made, from a hero to a poet. He was good at any exercises of skill or vigour. His mother, to whom he was ardently attached, died while he was yet at school; nor did he remain there beyond a very boyish age. He left in 1810, and was apprenticed for a term of five years to a surgeon of some eminence at Edmonton.

It does not appear that, up to this time, Keats had given evidence of any tendency towards poetizing: but the susceptibility which is visible in his poems to all forms of beauty and delight, and the unexhausted inspiration and spontaneous flow which they exhibit, manifestly needed nothing but the one small impulsion, to rouse him, and start him on his course. This came in 1812, with the reading of Spenser. His rapture knew no bounds, though it was perhaps even exceeded when soon after he passed on to the perusal of Chapman's Homer, which he would pore over all night long, and shout aloud in exultation. His earliest known lines speak undisguisedly to his first love in poetry, being those which are entitled *Imitation of Spenser*.

His apprenticeship being over, Keats came to London to walk the hospitals. But soon his profession became distasteful

to him. The operations which he performed were in fact successful; but an overwrought apprehension of doing mischief in this way haunted him continually. It was therefore not very long before he gave up the pursuit of surgery, after expending on it much of the moderate amount which he had inherited from his parents,—£2000, being his proportion of a sum of £8000, which had to be divided among the four children of the marriage. In a man whose poetic gift was so singularly rich, and his incitement towards writing consequently so extreme and exclusive, this should perhaps hardly be termed an imprudent step — it was certainly a natural one; but it proved partly unfortunate in the event, leaving him a few years later without any dependence or prospects, when the state of his health and his affections made both of these a necessity.

Not long after coming to London, Keats was introduced by Mr. C. Cowden Clarke to Leigh Hunt, with whom he often wrote verses in competition, and who treated him with the cordial good-nature and pressing encouragement which he so well knew how to bestow upon a youth of genius. Godwin, Hazlitt, Basil Montagu, Hamilton Reynolds, Dilke (the founder of the *Athenæum*), the celebrated painter Haydon, and the pictorial aspirant Severn, also became friends of Keats. Connexion with Hunt and his surroundings was an undoubted advantage, but also a danger, to a young writer. To enjoy the good graces of the editor of the *Examiner* was to be down in the black books of rival editors sweltering with the fiercest venoms of toryism; not to speak of the conceits and jaunty airs of style which prevailed among Hunt and his following, and which were but too likely to affect a beginner associated with them. An impartial reader of Keats will probably admit that the traces of this influence are more than sufficiently discernible in his work. He, however, denied that he belonged to Hunt's or to any one's school; and, being indeed immeasurably greater than Hunt himself—not to speak of his satellites—he

should not be termed exactly of his school, but rather a brilliant original poet partially infected with some of Hunt's vices of style. Keats's first small volume of poetry, containing miscellaneous products of his youth, was published in 1817. It was hardly noticed at all: adverse critics who would fain have fallen foul of *anything* emanating from Hunt's circle could not afford so much as to abuse Keats as yet — he was too obscure a phenomenon.

The health of the young poet was already but indifferent. In the spring of 1817 he went off to the Isle of Wight, and applied himself to the writing of *Endymion*—an arduous work which, it has been said, he undertook to perform in six months, competing with Shelley. The latter (as we have seen) had met Keats at Hunt's house, and produced in this amicable rivalry the *Revolt of Islam*. Keats was actually engaged upon his poem for about seven months, bringing it to a conclusion (irrespectively of after touching-up) on the 28th of November 1817. Its imperfections of execution may therefore have been partly attributable to rashness in fixing a period for the achievement; but much more, no doubt, to the juvenility of his genius, and a certain sense that it lay upon him to produce this invention such as it might come and might be, and trust to future work for the higher maturity and more proportional development which would justly pertain to that. He spent at Hampstead, in intercourse with Hunt and other friends, the winter of 1817–18; and, towards the close of the composition of his poem, made a tour in Scotland with one of his chief intimates, Mr. Charles Armitage Brown, a retired Russia-merchant. The prefatory notice to *Endymion*—at once ambitious in tone, and modest or almost deprecatory in statement—is dated in April 1818, and the publication ensued in due course. Like Keats's first volume, this important and dazzling poem also excited little public interest; but it was not destined to run the proper and natural course for such a work. It would have been fair that *Endymion*

should remain for some while obscure and uninteresting to the mass of readers; that its beauties should be from the first fascinating to a few, and generously proclaimed, along with unstinted admission, but no ill-natured trumpeting, of its multitudinous defects and perversities; and that the sense of its astonishing poetic quality should gradually assume larger and larger relative importance, till its blemishes should be obscured, and the work take its due station in literature, and in the sympathies of all persons worthy to become its readers. Critical malignity formed a contrary estimate of how to treat *Endymion*. A scribe in the *Quarterly Review*—I believe it was the editor, Mr. Gifford—undertook to write Keats down an ass, and many a responsive bray, sounding loudest and most jubilant from *Blackwood's Magazine*, ratified the dictum at the time. But lo! after a few years had elapsed, it was found that the reviewer had only succeeded in one and a very different enterprise—that of writing *himself* down an ass. The lash brandished against Keats's back had but recoiled, and scored the more pachydermatous loins of Gifford. It would be equally untrue and futile to deny that some of the censure awarded by the critic to the poet was deserved—abundantly deserved: but the first and imperative function of a critic who assumes to review actual or professing poets is to know the real one from the false, and, when he has found a real one, to affirm the fact with all explicitness and respect, and to deal out his acerbities to scale. It was perfectly legitimate in 1818—and I think is perfectly legitimate at the present day—to reprobate very decisively a good deal of *Endymion*, whether as regards the literary style or the narrative plan; but it never has been endurable, and least of all was it endurable in the first glow and flush of the young poet's aspiration, that a hard-natured man like Gifford should rail at Keats, with no frank acknowledgment of his marvellous powers, but simply with a wish to hurt his feelings and injure his prospects. If we

surmise (what is probably correct) that Gifford was not really so altogether obtuse to Keats's excellences as his criticism seemed to show, we only add the brand of uncandour to that of spite; and, if we further assent to the patent truth that Gifford's dead set at Keats was made partly as a side-blow to Hunt and other hostile politicians, we thereby affirm his dishonest and profligate partizanship. But indeed I am wasting words upon a criticism equally ludicrous and opprobrious by this time :—

"Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now."

It is more to the purpose to say that the once very prevalent story that Keats had been extremely pained and dejected by the adverse reviews, even to the extent of losing in consequence of them his health and ultimately his life, was a romance of literature. Shelley by a noble poem, and Byron by a jeer, are greatly responsible for the diffusion and acceptance of this fable: Lord Houghton has, to the deep satisfaction of all who value manliness as a portion of the poetic character, dispelled it once and for ever. That Keats felt some degree of irritation and also of disappointment is probable, or rather must have been the fact; but he was more surprised than depressed, and more contemptuous than either. Such phrases as the following, which we find in Keats's letters about this time—some of them before and some after the publication of the abusive reviews—do not look much like being "puffed out by an article." "I have not the slightest feeling of humility towards the public, or to anything in existence but the Eternal Being, the principle of Beauty, and the memory of great men. . . . I never wrote one single line of poetry with the least shadow of public thought. . . . My own domestic criticism has given me pain without comparison beyond what *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* could possibly inflict. . . . I have written independently, without judgment. . . . I think I shall be among the English poets after my death."

It is a fact, however, that the decline—the definite and alarm-

ing and soon fatal decline—in the health and spirits of Keats synchronized pretty nearly with the criticisms of his London and Edinburgh assailants. Nor can we easily disbelieve the testimony of his friend Haydon—an intimate, admiring, and sincerely loving though too importunate friend—to the effect that the critic-stung poet was weak enough to give way at the time to drinking. "Fiery, impetuous, ungovernable, and undecided" (says the painter, in a letter addressed to Miss Mitford, immediately after receiving the news of Keats's death), "he expected the world to bow at once to his talents, as his friends had done; and he had not patience to bear the natural irritation of envy at the undoubted proof he gave of strength. Goaded by ridicule, he distrusted himself, and flew to dissipation. For six weeks he was hardly ever sober; and (to show you what a man of genius does when his passions are roused) he told me that he once covered his tongue and throat, as far as he could reach, with cayenne pepper, in order to enjoy 'the delicious coolness of claret in all its glory.' This was his own expression." At a later date also Haydon "remonstrated" (as he writes) "on his absurd dissipation, but to no purpose." Nor was that the only subject of remonstrance. Haydon would fain have seen his friend a christian in belief, but found Keats drifting further and further from that order of ideas.

In October 1818 the poet met a lady (Miss Fanny Brawne, afterwards Mrs. Lindon) who at once took potent possession of his imagination and his senses, and was shortly the devouring passion of his heart. She was a cousin of some friends of Keats in whose family he first saw her, a lady of East-Indian connexions, then staying with her cousins to be out of the way of some domestic discomfort. "She is not a Cleopatra," said the poet in first writing about her, "but is at least a Charmian. She has a rich eastern look: she has fine eyes and fine manners. When she comes into the room, she makes the same impression as the beauty of a leopardess." Hitherto he had been very

shy of women; having worshiped them with all a boy's dreamy devotion while at school, but afterwards, on a nearer view, having experienced some loss of a dear ideal illusion, mixed with vexations and perturbations which had rather kept him out of the way of the sex. Now he loved with passion, almost with fury, —and, although his affection was returned and his suit favoured, the fervency of his love was fated to pass soon into gloom and soon afterwards into desperation. His want of means was a bar to marriage: he had neither money, nor the expectation of making money, nor a professional position of any kind. In a nation of shopkeepers and of insular politicians his sole known function was to write splendid but partially juvenile poetry, and his prospects were naturally considered not altogether "eligible." This made him unhappy enough: increasing ill-health darkened around him; and with rage eating at his heart the unhappy poet divined that he should be dead ere health and fortune would combine to fix the golden moment, and to yield his mistress to his arms. The fatal crisis and the visibly fatal symptoms delayed; but, years before the end, Coleridge, shaking hands with Keats, had whispered to Leigh Hunt, "There is death in that hand."

Death was to be about Keats's path before it visited himself. In the autumn of 1818, his youngest and dearly loved brother Tom expired: the poet tended him affectionately, and weakened his own constitution in consequence. There was another brother George who about the same time emigrated to America; and a sister who eventually married a gentleman of some literary merit, Senhor Llanos. This lady is still living in Spain, and has a son known as a painter.

Keats had written his *Isabella* before the Scottish trip with Mr. Armitage Brown in 1818; the *Eve of St. Agnes* was the composition of the winter of the same year; *Lamia*, of the earlier part of 1819. *Hyperion*, which had been carried up to its present uncompleted condition by about the time when the hostile reviews of *Endymion* appeared, did not content its author

—he considered it to be deformed by Miltonic inversions; and partly in this feeling, partly from other motives, the poem was set aside. According to the original design, it would have reached about the same length as *Endymion*. In conjunction with Mr. Brown, Keats also undertook the writing of the drama of *Otho the Great*. Brown supplied the subject, and the general conduct of the story; Keats put all into form and verse. The two friends worked on their joint plan, sitting *vis-à-vis*: finally Keats grew dissatisfied with its outcome, and executed the fifth act unassisted. Elliston, the theatrical manager, accepted the drama for representation, and Kean was expected to undertake the principal character: but all this project came to nothing. In these months Keats also took up the study of the Italian poets.

He had now been ailing for some while, but as yet no positively alarming symptoms had appeared. One night he travelled to Hampstead outside a stage-coach, and was conscious of having caught a chill. He went to bed, vomited something, lit a candle, and looked: he had learned enough in surgery to affirm that it was arterial blood. "That drop," he said, "is my death-warrant: I must die." He was calm at the time. Some few weeks passed, and he was apparently recovered. In the autumn of 1819 he took a lodging in Westminster, intending to write regularly for periodicals: but he soon found that he could not bear even this small degree of separation from his beloved, and he returned to his old neighbourhood, and was for a while almost domesticated with her family. The necessity of some definite employment became more and more evident and urgent, the reluctance to take the decisive step greater and greater: he debated between emigrating to South America, and closing with an appointment as surgeon to an East Indiaman. In wearing conflicts of feeling and of resolve, but not without hope as to his prospects of health, Keats was endeavouring to reconcile himself to his lot when a serious attack of blood-spitting came on. He saw

that the only chance of saving his life lay in departure to a milder climate.

Meantime the last of his contributions to the poetry of England and of the world—the small volume entitled *Lamia, Isabella, the Eve of St. Agnes, and other Poems*—had been published. Its prefatory note is dated in June 1820, and is to the effect that the fragment of *Hyperion* is included in the volume at the publisher's request, and contrary to the inclination of the author, who had left it unfinished in consequence of the unfavourable reception of *Endymion*. It is fortunate that the publishers prevailed in this debate; for *Hyperion* is *par excellence* the poem by Keats which both Byron and Shelley warmly admired, and perhaps, had there been no *Hyperion* published during the author's lifetime, there would have been no *Adonais* written, to proclaim his immortality as soon as the mortal part was consigned to the grave. This *Lamia* volume was received in a fairly respectful tone; and a notice by Jeffrey shortly appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, calculated to redress the stolid injustice previously done by the *Quarterly* and by *Blackwood*. Another poetic project formed by Keats was the poem named *The Cap and Bells*, somewhat in Ariosto's vein, with which he made a beginning.

Nothing further remains to be told of his career, beyond the miseries of disease and death; disease rapid, terrible, relentless, and overwhelming at times to the mind as well as the body of the sufferer—death foreseen and inevitable, and at last welcomed with open arms. Towards the middle of September 1820 Keats embarked, accompanied by his old acquaintance Mr. Severn, who had just won the gold medal of the Royal Academy for historical painting: they went by sea to Naples. Sharp indeed were the pangs of blighted and never-to-be-appeased love with which the poet took leave of his mistress. From Naples (in which city he received from Shelley an invitation, which he did not act upon, to join him and be nursed at Pisa) the two friends proceeded to Rome,

where the dying man was attended by Dr. (afterwards Sir James) Clark: he soon took to his bed here, and was not destined to rise from it again. The last letter which he wrote was dated on the 30th of November. Still he lingered awhile; lingered, suffered, raved, and at last became resigned. At one time he said, "I feel the daisies[1] growing over me"; his last words were, "Thank God it has come." It *did* come—the pitiless and merciful Death which comes to all came quietly to Keats—on the 23rd of February 1821. Shortly before this he had received a letter from the lady of his heart, which he had not courage to read. He directed that it should be buried with him, along with a purse and letter from his sister; and that the inscription over his bones should be, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water." That is an age-long and shoreless water, which will continue flowing while generation after generation of men, his brothers and lovers, come to contemplate the sacred tomb in Rome, dominated by the pyramid of Caius Cestius. They have but to move some paces aside, and stand by a still more sacred tomb which opened in the ensuing year, 1822—that of the world-loving, world-hated Shelley, divinest of the demigods.

Keats had an unusually small head, covered with copious auburn-brown ringlets, which he wore parted down the middle: his lower limbs also were small beyond the due proportion for his broad-shouldered and generally alert and vigorous-looking, though by no means tall, frame. His eyes were large, blue, and sensitive: his mouth likewise was singularly sensitive, combined with a certain pugnacious look of the full under-lip, meeting a rather overhanging upper lip. The general brightness and even beauty of his face were most observable, marked by an "expression as if he had been looking on some glorious sight." Wide at the forehead, and comparatively small at the chin, the visage was partly feminine in contour, and with less than masculine squareness, yet eminently virile and gallant.

[1] So in Leigh Hunt's narrative; Lord Houghton says "the flowers."

But in fact he was never strong constitutionally: his tendency to consumption was congenital, and so great were the ravages of the disease before its final triumph that his lungs were found, after death, to be almost obliterated. As to his character, no one who is even cursorily acquainted with his poems can doubt that an intense capacity for enjoyment, and a great readiness to yield himself up to impulses of this kind, were preëminent in his nature. These qualities were united with kindliness, love of right, and a quick sense of honour. Courage was also conspicuous. Habitually gentle, Keats was indignant at any calumny or baseness: about the time when he was composing *Endymion*, he thrashed a butcher who was beating a little boy in the street, and his vigorous comment upon hearing of certain shabbinesses of conduct has been recorded, "Is there no human dust-hole into which we can sweep such fellows?" With such a tendency of feeling, it is not perhaps surprising that he was personally a little thinskinned, and that his relations with friendly people of a social origin superior to his own had a tinge of antagonism—as for instance even with Shelley. In society he combined earnestness and pleasantry. His intensest delight in life, he once told Severn, had been the watching of the growth of flowers; in poetry, after a while, his great standard of style, and continual companion, was the Sonnets of Shakespeare. He said in one instance that "the polar-star of poetry," in his view, was Invention: and, among the many striking observations which he has left upon the art of which he was so great though so youthful a master, none is more rememberable than this, "The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dream; he awoke, and found it truth."

As of Keats's character, so of his poetry, enjoyment is the primary element, the perpetual undertone: his very melancholy is the luxury of sadness, his despair the drained and reversed cup of ecstasy. Enjoyment as the soul of the work, profusion as its body; consummate niceties of art as its adornment. The spirit of art was always vividly near and precious to Keats. He

fashioned it exuberantly into a thousand shapes, now of gem-like exquisiteness, now mere sightly or showy trinkets; and of these the scrupulous taste will even pronounce the cheapest, and rightly pronounce them, to be trumpery. Still, there is the feeling of art, however provoking its masquerade; recognizable here as clearly as it is in the formative fine art, wrought by a cunning hand, in a period of great and overblown development and impending decadence—such as the late cinquecento or the earlier French rococo. Not indeed that, in Keats's case, there is any taint of decadence—but on the contrary the wanton and tangled wilfulnesses of a beautiful precocity, and a beautiful immaturity. Clearer and clearer did the true and high promptings of art become to him as he advanced, and more immediate and certain his response to them. He might have said at the last with Nero "*Qualis artifex pereo!*"

The reader of Keats is conscious mainly of two critical impressions—the unsatisfied perception of what the glorious aspirant could and would have done with a longer span of life, and astonishment that so much was actually accomplished by one so young. If he is a reader qualified to peruse Keats, these two impressions will leave scanty room for another, which is nevertheless perfectly correct—the sense of the extreme and even exasperating faultiness of much of that which the delightful poet has left us—a positive, not a negative faultiness—no falling-short, but a distinct misdoing. Nor will such a reader much repine over the reflection that Keats, had he lived longer, would have written more, and still better to boot. Keats, youthful and prodigal, the magician of unnumbered beauties which neither author nor reader can think of counting or assessing, is the Keats of our affections. Mature him, and he would be a more perfect planner and executant, and promoted to yet loftier office among the immortals; but he could not win upon us more,—could not leave us a more lovely memory, nor so priceless a treasure of regret.

POET BORN BETWEEN KEATS AND HOOD.

WILLIAM MOTHERWELL .... 1797 to 1835. .

THOMAS HOOD.

THERE were scarcely any events in the life of Thomas Hood. One condition there was of too potent determining importance —life-long ill health; and one circumstance of moment—a commercial failure, and consequent expatriation. Beyond this, little presents itself for record in the outward facts of this upright and beneficial career, bright with genius and coruscating with wit, dark with the lengthening and deepening shadow of death.

The father of Thomas Hood was engaged in business as a publisher and bookseller in the Poultry, in the city of London, —a member of the firm of Vernor, Hood, and Sharpe. He was a Scotchman, and had come up to the capital early in life, to make his way. His interest in books was not solely confined to their saleable quality. He reprinted various old works with success; published Bloomfield's poems, and dealt handsomely with him; and was himself the author of two novels, which are stated to have had some success in their day. For the sake of the son rather than the father, one would like to see some account, with adequate specimens, of these long-forgotten tales; for the queries which Thomas Hood asks concerning the piteous woman of his *Bridge of Sighs* interest us all concerning a man of genius, and interest us moreover with regard to the question of intellectual as well as natural affinity :—

"Who was his father,
Who was his mother?
Had he a sister,
Had he a brother?"

Another line of work in which the elder Hood is recorded to have been active was the opening of the English book-trade with America. He married a sister of the engraver Mr. Sands, and had by her a large family: two sons and four daughters survived the period of childhood. The elder brother, James, who died early of consumption, drew well, as did also one or two of the sisters. It would seem therefore, when we recall Thomas Hood's aptitudes and frequent miscellaneous practice in the same line, that a certain tendency towards fine art, as well as towards literature, ran in the family. The consumption which killed James appears to have been inherited from his mother: she, and two of her daughters, died of the same disease; and a pulmonary affection of a somewhat different kind became, as we shall see, one of the poet's most inveterate persecutors. The death of the father, which was sudden and unexpected, preceded that of the mother, but not of James, and left the survivors in rather straitened circumstances.

Thomas, the second of the two sons, was born in the Poultry, on or about the 23rd of May 1799. He is stated to have been a retired child, with much quiet humour: chuckling, we may guess, over his own quaint imaginings, which must have come in crowds, and of all conceivable or inconceivable sorts, to judge from the product of his after years; keeping most of these fancies and surprises to himself, but every now and then letting some of them out, and giving homely or stolid bystanders an inkling of insight into the many-peopled crannies of his boyish brain. He received his education at Dr. Wanostrocht's school at Clapham. It is not very clear how far this education extended:[1] I should infer that it was just about enough, and not

[1] The authority—I might almost say, the *one* authority—for the life of Hood, is the *Memorials* published by his son and daughter. Any point which is not clearly brought out in that affectionate and interesting record will naturally be equally or more indefinite in my brief summary, founded as it is on the *Memorials*.

more than enough, to enable Hood to shift for himself in the career of authorship, without serious disadvantage from inadequate early training, and also without much aid thence derived—without, at any rate, any such rousing and refining of the literary sense as would warrant us in attributing to educational influences either the inclination to become an author, or the manipulative power over language and style which Hood displayed in his serious poems, not to speak of those of a lighter kind. We seem to see him sliding, as it were, into the profession of letters, simply through capacity and liking, and the course of events—not because he had resolutely made up his mind to be an author, nor because his natural faculty had been steadily or studiously cultivated. As to details, it may be remarked that his schooling included some amount—perhaps a fair average amount—of Latin. We find it stated that he had a Latin prize at school, but was not apt at the language in later years. He had however one kind of aptitude at it—being addicted to the use of familiar Latin quotations or phrases, cited with humorous verbal perversions.

In all the relations of family life, and the forms of family affection, Hood was simply exemplary. The deaths of his elder brother and of his father left him the principal reliance of his mother, herself destined soon to follow them to the tomb: he was an excellent and devoted son. His affection for one of his sisters, Anne, who also died shortly afterwards, is attested in the beautiful lines named *The Deathbed*,—

"We watched her breathing through the night."

At a later date, the loves of a husband and a father seem to have absorbed by far the greater part of his nature and his thoughts: his letters to friends are steeped and drenched in "Jane," "Fanny," and "Tom junior." These letters are mostly divided between perpetual family details and perennial jocularity: a succession of witticisms, or at lowest of puns and whimsicalities, mounts up like so many squibs and crackers,

fizzing through, sparkling amid, or ultimately extinguished by the inevitable shower—the steady gush and downpour—of the home-affections. It may easily be inferred from this account that there are letters which one is inclined to read more thoroughly, and in greater number consecutively, than Hood's.

The vocation first selected for Hood, towards the age of fifteen, was one which he did not follow up for long—that of an engraver. He was apprenticed to his uncle Mr. Sands, and afterwards to one of the Le Keux family. The occupation was ill-suited to his constantly ailing health, and this eventually conduced to his abandoning it. He then went to Scotland to recruit, remaining there among his relatives about five years. [1] According to a statement made by himself, he was in a merchant's office within this interval; it is uncertain, however, whether this assertion is to be accepted as genuine, or as made for some purpose of fun. His first published writing appeared in the *Dundee Advertiser* in 1814—his age being then, at the utmost, fifteen and a half; this was succeeded by some contribution to a local magazine. But as yet he had no idea of authorship as a profession.

[1] "Two years," according to the *Memorials;* but the dates for this portion of Hood's life are not accurately given in that work. Hood completed the fifteenth year of his age in May 1814. It is certain, from the dates of his letters, that his sojourn in Scotland began not later than September 1815; and the writer of the *Memorials* himself affirms that Hood "returned to London about 1820," in or before July. If so, he was in Scotland about *five* years; and, from the fact that he had written in a Dundee newspaper in 1814, one might even surmise that the term of six years was nearer the mark. At any rate, as he had reached Scotland by September 1815, he was there soon after completing his sixteenth year: yet Mr. Hessey (*Memorials*, p. 23) says that he was articled to the engraving business "at the age of fifteen or sixteen," and his apprenticeship, according to Mr. Hood junior, lasted "some years" even *before* his transfer from Mr. Sands to Mr. Le Keux. The apprenticeship did not begin until after the father's death; but the year of that death is left unspecified, though the day and month are given. These dates, as the reader will readily perceive, are sometimes vague, and sometimes contradictory. In the text of my notice, I have endeavoured to pick my way through their discrepancies.

Towards the middle of the year 1820, Hood was re-settled in London, improved in health, and just come of age. At first he continued practising as an engraver; but in 1821 he began to act as a sort of sub-editor for the *London Magazine*, after the death of the editor, Mr. Scott, in a duel. He concocted fictitious and humorous answers to correspondents—a humble yet appropriate introduction to the insatiable habit and faculty for out-of-the-way verbal jocosity which marked-off his after career from that of all other excellent poets. His first regular contribution to the magazine, in July 1821, was a little poem *To Hope:* even before this, as early at any rate as 1815, he was in the frequent practice of writing correctly and at some length in verse, as witnessed by selections, now in print, from what he had composed for the amusement of his relatives. Soon afterwards, a private literary society was the recipient of other verses of the same order. The lines *To Hope* were followed, in the *London Magazine*, by the *Ode to Dr. Kitchener* and some further poems, including the important work, *Lycus the Centaur*—after the publication of which, there could not be much doubt of the genuine and uncommon powers of the new writer. The last contribution of Hood to this magazine was the *Lines to a Cold Beauty*. Another early work of his, and one which, like the verses *To the Moon*, affords marked evidence of the impression which he had received from Keats's poetry, is the unfinished drama (or, as he termed it, "romance") of *Lamia:* I do not find its precise date recorded. Its verse is lax, and its tone somewhat immature; yet it shows a great deal of sparkling and diversified talent. Hood certainly takes a rather more rational view than Keats did of his subject as a moral invention, or a myth having some sort of meaning at its root. A serpent transformed into a woman, who beguiles a youth of the highest hopes into amorous languid self-abandonment, is clearly not, in morals, the sort of person that ought to be left uncontrolled to her own devices. Keats ostentatiously

resents the action of the unimpassioned philosopher Apollonius in revealing the true nature of the woman-serpent, and dissolving her spell. An elderly pedant to interfere with the pretty whims of a viper when she wears the outer semblance of a fine woman! Intolerable!—Such is the sentiment of Keats; but such plainly is not altogether the conviction of Hood, although his story remains but partially developed.

By this time it may have become pretty clear to himself and others that his proper vocation and destined profession was literature. Through the *London Magazine*, he got to know John Hamilton Reynolds (author of the *Garden of Florence* and other poems, and a contributor to this serial under the pseudonym of Edward Herbert), Charles Lamb, Allan Cunningham, De Quincey, and other writers of reputation. To Hood the most directly important of all these acquaintances was Mr. Reynolds; this gentleman having a sister, Jane, to whom Hood was introduced. An attachment ensued, and shortly terminated in marriage, the wedding taking place on the 5th of May 1824. The father of Miss Reynolds was the head writing-master at Christ Hospital. She is stated to have had good manners, a cultivated mind, and literary tastes, though a high educational standard is not always traceable in her letters. At any rate the marriage was a happy one; Mrs. Hood being a tender and attentive wife, unwearied in the cares which her husband's precarious health demanded, and he being (as I have said) a mirror of marital constancy and devotion, distinguishable from a lover rather by his intense delight in all domestic relations and details than by any cooling-down in his fondness. It would appear that, in the later years of Hood's life, he was not on entirely good terms with some members of his wife's family, including his old friend John Hamilton Reynolds. What may have caused this I do not find specified: all that we know of the character of Hood justifies us in thinking that he was little or not at all to blame, for he appears throughout a man of just,

honourable, and loving nature, and free besides from that sort of self-assertion which invites a collision. Every one, however, has his blemishes; and we may perhaps discern in Hood a certain over-readiness to think himself imposed upon, and the fellow-creatures with whom he had immediately to do a generation of vipers—a state of feeling not characteristic of a mind exalted and magnanimous by habit, or "gentle" in the older and more significant meaning of the term.

The time was now come for Hood to venture a volume upon the world. Conjointly with Reynolds, he wrote, and published in 1825, his *Odes and Addresses to Great People.* The title-page bore no author's name; but the extraordinary talent and point of the work could hardly fail to be noticed, even apart from its appeal to immediate popularity, dealing as it did so continually with the uppermost topics of the day. It had what it deserved, a great success. This volume was followed, in 1826, by the first series of *Whims and Oddities,* which also met with a good sale; the second series appeared in 1827. Next came two volumes of *National Tales,* somewhat after the manner of Boccaccio (but how far different from his spirit may easily be surmised), which are now little known. The volume containing the *Plea of the Midsummer Fairies, Hero and Leander,* and some other of Hood's most finished and noticeable poems, came out in 1827. *The Midsummer Fairies* itself was one of the author's own favourite works, and certainly deserved to be so, as far as dainty elegance of motive and of execution is concerned: but the conception was a little too ingeniously remote for the public to ratify the author's predilection. The *Hero and Leander* will be at once recognized as modelled on the style of Elizabethan narrative poems: indeed, Marlow treated the very same subject, and his poem, left uncompleted, was finished by Chapman. Hood's is a most astonishing example of revivalist poetry: it is reproductive and spontaneous at the same time. It resembles its models closely, not servilely

—significantly, not mechanically; and has the great merit of resembling them with comparative moderation. Elizabethan here both in spirit and in letter, Hood is nevertheless a little less extreme than his prototypes. Where they loaded, he does not find it needful to overload, which is the ready and almost the inevitable resource of revivalists, all but the fewest: on the contrary, he alleviates a little,—a little, not much.

In 1829 appeared the most famous of all his poems of a narrative character—*The Dream of Eugene Aram;* it was published in the *Gem*, an annual which the poet was then editing. Besides this amount of literary activity, Hood continued writing in periodicals, sometimes under the signature of "Theodore M."

His excessive and immeasurable addiction to rollicking fun, to the perpetual "cracking of jokes" (for it amounts to that more definitely than to anything else in the domain of the Comic Muse), is a somewhat curious problem, taken in connexion with his remarkable genius and accomplishment as a poet, and his personal character as a solid housekeeping citizen, bent chiefly upon rearing his family in respectability, and paying his way, or, as the Church Catechism has neatly and unimprovably expressed it, upon "doing his duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him." His almost constant ill-health, and, in a minor degree, the troubles which beset him in money-matters, make the problem all the more noticeable. The influence of Charles Lamb may have had something to do with it,—probably not very much. Perhaps there was something in the literary atmosphere or the national tone of the time which gave comicality a turn of predominance after the subsiding of the great poetic wave which filled the last years of the eighteenth and the first quarter of the nineteenth century in our country, in Blake, Burns, Wordsworth, Scott, Coleridge, Landor, Byron, Keats, and, supreme among all, Shelley. Something of the same transition may be noticed in the art of design; the multi-

farious illustrator in the prior generation is Stothard,—in the later, Cruikshank. At any rate, in literature, Lamb, Hood, and then Dickens in his earliest works, the *Sketches by Boz* and *Pickwick*, are uncommonly characteristic and leading minds, and bent, with singular inveteracy, upon being "funny,"—though not funny and nothing else at all. But we should not force this consideration too far: Hood is a central figure in the group and the period, and the tendency of the time may be almost as much due to him as he to the tendency. Mainly, we have to fall back upon his own idiosyncrasy: he was born with a boundlessly whimsical perception, which he trained into an inimitable sleight-of-hand in the twisting of notions and of words; circumstances favoured his writing for fugitive publications and skimming readers, rather than under conditions of greater permanency; and the result is as we find it in his works. His son expresses the opinion that part of Hood's success in comic writing arose from his early reading of *Humphrey Clinker*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Tom Jones*, and other works of that period, and imbuing himself with their style: a remark, however, which applies to his prose rather than his poetical works. Certain it is that the appetite for all kinds of fun, verbal and other, was a part of Hood's nature. We see it in the practical jokes he was continually playing on his good-humoured wife—such as altering into grotesque absurdity many of the words contained in her letters to friends: we see it—the mere animal love of jocularity, as it might be termed—in such a small point as his frequently addressing his friend Philip de Franck, in letters, by the words, "Tim, says he," instead of any human appellative.[1]

[1] This "Tim, says he," is a perfect *gag* in many of Hood's letters. It is curious to learn what was the kind of joke which could assume so powerful an ascendant over the mind and associations of this great humourist. Here it is, as given in the Hood *Memorials* from *Sir Jonah Barrington's Memoirs*:—

"'Tim,' says he.—
'Sir,' says he.—
'Fetch me my hat,' says he;

Hood reminds us very much of one of Shakespeare's Fools (to use the word in no invidious sense) transported into the nineteenth century,—the Fool in *King Lear*, or Touchstone. For the occasional sallies of coarseness or ribaldry, the spirit of the time has substituted a *bourgeois* good-humour which respects the family circle, and haunts the kitchen-stairs; for the biting jeer, intended to make some victim uncomfortable, it gives the sarcastic or sprightly banter, not unconscious of an effort at moral amelioration; for the sententious sagacity, and humorous enjoyment of the nature of man, it gives bright thoughts and a humanitarian sympathy. But, on the whole, the intellectual personality is nearly the same: seeking by natural affinity, and enjoying to the uttermost, whatever tends to lightness of heart and to ridicule—thus dwelling indeed in the region of the commonplace and the gross, but constantly informing it with some suggestion of poetry, some wise side-meaning, or some form of sweetness and grace. These observations relate of course to Hood's humorous poems: into his grave and pathetic poems he can import qualities still loftier than these—though even here it is not often that he utterly forswears quaintness and oddity. The risible, the fantastic, was his beacon-light; sometimes as delicate as a dell of glow-worms; sometimes as uproarious as a bonfire; sometimes, it must be said (for he had to be perpetually writing whether the inspiration came or not, or his inspiration was too liable to come from the very platitudes and pettinesses of everyday life), not much more brilliant

'That I may go,' says he,
'To Timahoe,' says he,
'And go the fair,' says he,
'And see all that's there,' says he.—
'First pay what you owe,' says he;
'And then you may go,' says he,
'To Timahoe,' says he,
'And go to the fair,' says he,
'And see all that's there,' says he.—
'Now by this and by that,' says he,
'Tim, hang up my hat,' says he."

than a rushlight, and hardly more aromatic than the snuff of a tallow candle.

We must now glance again at Hood's domestic affairs. His first child had no mundane existence worth calling such; but has nevertheless lived longer than most human beings in the lines which Lamb wrote for the occasion, *On an Infant dying as soon as born.* A daughter followed, and in 1830 was born his son, the Tom Hood who became editor of the comic journal *Fun*, and died in 1874. At the time of his birth, the family was living at Winchmore Hill; thence they removed, about 1832, to the Lake House, Wanstead, a highly picturesque dwelling, but scanty in domestic comforts. The first of the *Comic Annual* series was brought out at Christmas 1830. In the following couple of years, Hood did some theatrical work; writing the libretto for an English opera which (it is believed) was performed at the Surrey Theatre. Its name is now unknown, but it had a good run in its day: a similar fate has befallen an entertainment which he wrote for Mathews. He also composed a pantomime for the Adelphi; and, along with Reynolds, dramatized *Gil Blas.* This play is understood to have been acted at Drury Lane. The novel of *Tylney Hall*, and the poem of the *Epping Hunt*, were written at Wanstead.

Born in comfortable mediocrity, and early inured to narrow fortunes, Hood had no doubt entered upon the literary calling without expecting or caring to become rich. Hitherto, however, he seems to have prospered progressively, and to have had no reason to regret, even in a worldly sense, his choice of a profession. But towards the end of 1834 a disaster overtook him; and thenceforth, to the end of his days, he had nothing but tedious struggling and uphill work. To a man of his buoyant temperament, and happy in his home, this might have been of no extreme consequence, if only sound health had blessed him: unfortunately, the very reverse was the case. Sickly hitherto, he was soon to become miserably and hopelessly diseased: he

worked on through everything bravely and uncomplainingly, but no doubt with keen throbs of discomfort, and not without detriment at times to the quality of his writings. The disaster adverted to was the failure of a firm with which Hood was connected, entailing severe loss upon him. With his accustomed probity, he refused to avail himself of any legal immunities, and resolved to meet his engagements in full eventually; but it became requisite that he should withdraw from England. He proposed to settle down in some one of the towns on the Rhine, and circumstances fixed his choice on Coblentz. A great storm which overtook him during the passage to Rotterdam told damagingly on his already feeble health. Coblentz, which he reached in March 1835, pleased him at first; though it was not long before he found himself a good deal of an Englishman, and his surroundings vexatiously German. After a while he came to consider a German Jew and a Jew German nearly convertible terms; and indulged at times in considerable acrimony of comment, such as a reader of cosmopolitan temper is not inclined to approve. He had, however, at least one very agreeable acquaintance at Coblentz—Lieutenant Philip de Franck, an officer in the Prussian service, of partly English parentage: the good-fellowship which he kept up with this amiable gentleman, both in personal intercourse and by letter, was (as we have seen) even boyishly vivacious and exuberant. In the first instance Hood lived at No. 372 Castor Hof, where his family joined him in the Spring of 1835: about a year later, they removed to No. 752 Alten Graben. Spasms in the chest now began to be a trying and alarming symptom of his ill health, which, towards the end of 1836, took a turn for the worse; he never afterwards rallied very effectually, though the fluctuations were numerous—(in November 1838, for instance, he fancied that a radical improvement had suddenly taken place)—and at times the danger was imminent. The unfavourable change in question was nearly simultaneous with a visit which he made to

Berlin, accompanying Lieutenant de Franck and his regiment, on their transfer to Bromberg: the rate of travelling was from fifteen to twenty English miles per diem, for three days consecutively, and then one day of rest. Hood liked the simple unextortionate Saxon folk whom he encountered on the route, and contrasted them with the Coblentzers, much to the disadvantage of the latter. By the beginning of December he was back in his Rhineland home; but finally quitted it towards May 1837. Several attacks of blood-spitting occurred in the interval; at one time Hood proposed for himself the deadly-lively epitaph, "Here lies one who spat more blood and made more puns than any other man." About this time he was engaged in writing *Up the Rhine;* performing, as was his wont, the greater part of the work during the night-hours.

The sojourn at Coblentz was succeeded by a sojourn at Ostend; in which city—besides the sea, which Hood always supremely delighted in—he found at first more comfort in the ordinary mode of living, including the general readiness at speaking or understanding English. Gradually, however, the climate, extremely damp and often cold, proved highly unsuitable to him; and, when he quitted Ostend in the Spring of 1840, at the close of nearly three years' residence there, it was apparent that his stay had already lasted too long. Within this period the publication of *Hood's Own* had occurred, and put to a severe trial even *his* unrivalled fertility in jest: one of his letters speaks of the difficulty of being perfectly original in the jocose vein, more especially with reference to the concurrent demands of *Hood's Own*, and of the *Comic Annual* of the year. At the beginning of 1839 he paid a visit of about three weeks to his often-regretted England, staying with one of his oldest and most intimate friends, Mr. Dilke, then editor of the *Athenæum*. Another of his best friends—one indeed who continued to the end most unwearied and affectionate in his professional and other attentions, Dr. Elliot—now made a

medical examination of Hood's condition. He pronounced the lungs to be organically sound; the chief seat of disease being the liver, and the heart, which was placed lower down than usual. At a later stage of the disease, enlargement of the heart is mentioned, along with hæmorrhage from the lungs consequent on that malady, and recurring with terrible frequency: to these dropsy, arising from extreme weakness, was eventually superadded. Indeed, the catalogue of the illnesses of the unconquerably hilarious Hood, and the details of his sufferings, are painful to read. They have at least the merit of giving a touch of adventitious but intimate pathos even to some of his wildest extravagances of verbal fence,—and of enhancing our sympathy and admiration for the force and beauty of his personal character, which could produce work such as this out of a torture of body and spirit such as that. During this visit to London, Hood scrutinized his publishing and other accounts, and found them sufficiently encouraging. The first edition of *Up the Rhine*, consisting of 1500 copies, sold off in a fortnight. Soon, however, some vexations with publishers ensued: Hood felt it requisite to take legal proceedings, and the action lingered on throughout and beyond the brief remainder of his life. Thus his prospects were again blighted, and his means crippled when most they needed to be unembarrassed.

The poet was back in England from Ostend in April 1840; and, under medical advice, he determined to prolong his visit into a permanent re-settlement in his native London. Here therefore he remained, and returned no more to the Continent. He took a house, with his family, in Camberwell, not far from the Green; removing afterwards to St. John's Wood, and finally to another house in the same district, Devonshire Lodge, Finchley Road. He wrote in the *New Monthly Magazine*, then edited by Theodore Hook: his *Rhymes for the Times*, the celebrated *Miss Kilmansegg*, and other compositions, first appeared here. Hook dying in August 1841, Hood was invited

to succeed him as editor, and closed with the offer: this gave him an annual salary of £300, besides the separate payments for any articles that he wrote. The *Song of the Shirt*, which it would be futile to praise or even to characterize, came out, anonymously of course, in the Christmas number of *Punch* for 1843: it ran like wildfire, and rang like a tocsin, through the land. Immediately afterwards, in January 1844, Hood's connexion with the *New Monthly* closed, and he started a publication of his own, *Hood's Magazine*, which was a considerable success: more than half the first number was the actual handiwork of the editor. Many troubles and cross-purposes, however, beset the new periodical; difficulties with which Hood was ill fitted, by his now rapidly and fatally worsening health, to cope. They pestered him when he was most in need of rest; and he was in need of rest when most he was wanted to control the enterprise. *The Haunted House*, and various other excellent poems by Hood, were published in this magazine.

His last days and final agonies were a little cheered by the granting of a Government pension of £100, dating from June 1844, which, with kindly but ominous foresight, was conferred upon Mrs. Hood, as likely to prove the survivor. This was during the ministry of Sir Robert Peel, whose courteous communications to the poet, and expressions of direct personal interest in his writings, made the boon all the more acceptable. Hood, indeed, had not been directly concerned in soliciting it. At a somewhat earlier date, January 1841, the Literary Society had, similarly unasked, voted him a sum of £50; but this he returned, although his circumstances were such as might have made it by no means unwelcome. From Christmas 1844 he was compelled to take to his bed, and was fated never to leave his room again. The ensuing Spring, throughout which the poet lay seemingly almost at the last gasp day by day, was a lovely one. At times he was delirious; but mostly

quite clear in mind, and full of gentleness and resignation. "Dying, dying," were his last words; and shortly before, "Lord, say 'Arise, take up thy cross, and follow me.'" On the 3rd of May 1845 he lay dead.

Hood's funeral took place in Kensal Green Cemetery: it was a quiet one, but many friends attended. His faithful and loving wife would not be long divided from him. Eighteen months later she was laid beside him, dying of an illness first contracted from her constant tendance on his sick-bed. In the closing period of his life, Hood could hardly bear her being out of his sight, or even write when she was away. Some years afterwards, a public subscription was got up, and a monument erected to mark the grave of the good man and true poet who "sang the Song of the Shirt."

The face of Hood is best known by two busts and an oil-portrait which have both been engraved from. It is a sort of face to which apparently a bust does more than justice, yet less than right. The features, being mostly by no means bad ones, look better, when thus reduced to the mere simple and abstract contour, than they probably showed in reality, for no one supposed Hood to be a fine-looking man; on the other hand, the *value* of the face must have been in its shifting expression—keen, playful, or subtle—and this can be but barely suggested by the sculptor. The poet's visage was pallid, his figure slight, his voice feeble; he always dressed in black, and is spoken of as presenting a generally clerical aspect. He was remarkably deficient in ear for music—not certainly for the true chime and varied resources of verse. His aptitude for the art of design was probably greater than might be inferred from the many comic woodcut-drawings which he has left. These are irresistibly ludicrous—(who would not laugh over "The Spoiled Child"—"What next? as the Frog said when his tail fell off"—and a host of others?)—and all the more ludicrous and effective for being drawn more childishly and less artistically than was

within Hood's compass. One may occasionally see some water-colour landscape-bit or the like from his hands pleasantly done; and during his final residence in England he acted upon an idea he had long entertained, and produced some little in the way of oil-painting. He was also ingenious in any sort of light fancy-work—such, for instance, as carving the scenery for a child's theatre which formed the delight of his little son and daughter. His religious faith was, according to the writers of the *Memorials*, deep and sincere, though his opposition to sectarian narrowness and spite of all sorts was vigorous, and caused him sometimes to be regarded as anti-religious. A letter of his to a tract-giving and piously censorious lady who had troubled him (published in the same book) is absolutely fierce, and indeed hardly to be reconciled with the courtesy due to a woman, as a mere question of sex. It would be convenient, I may observe, to know more plainly what the biographers mean by such expressions as "religious faith," "christian gentleman," and the like. They are not explained, for instance, by adding that Hood honoured the Bible too much to make it a task-book for his children. "Religious faith" covers many very serious differences of sentiment and conviction, between natural theology and historical christianity; and, on hearing that a man possessed religious faith, one would like to learn which of the two extremes this faith was more nearly conversant with. In respect of political or social opinion, Hood appears to have been rather humane and philanthropic than democratic, or "liberal" in the distinct technical sense. His favourite theory of government, as he said in a letter to Peel, was "an angel from heaven, and a despotism." He loved neither whigs nor tories, but was on the side of a national policy: war was his abhorrence, and so were the wicked corn-laws—an oligarchical device which survived him, but not for long. His private generosity, not the less true or hearty for the limits which a precarious and very mode-

rate income necessarily imposed on it, was in accordance with the general sentiments of kindness which he was wont to express both in public and private: if he preached, he did not forget to practise.

It has been well said [1] that "the predominant characteristics of his genius are humorous fancies grafted upon melancholy impressions." Yet the term "grafted" seems hardly strong enough. Hood appears, by natural bent and permanent habit of mind, to have seen and sought for ludicrousness under all conditions—it was the first thing that struck him as a matter of intellectual perception or choice. On the other hand, his nature being poetic, his sympathies acute, and the condition of his life morbid, he very frequently wrote in a tone of deep and indeed melancholy feeling, and was a master both of his own art and of the reader's emotion; but, even in work of this sort, the intellectual exercitation, when it takes precedence of the general feeling, is continually fantastic, grotesque, or positively mirthful. And so again with those of his works—including rude designs along with finished or off-hand writing—which are professedly comical: the funny twist of thought is the essential thing, and the most gloomy or horrible subject-matter is often selected as the occasion for the horse-laugh. In some of his works indeed (we might cite the poems named *The Dead Robbery*, *The Forge*, and *The Supper Superstition)* the horse-laugh almost passes into a nightmare laugh. A ghoul might seem to have set it going, and laughing hyænas to be chorusing it. A man of such a faculty and such a habit of work could scarcely, in all instances, keep himself within the bounds of good taste—a term which people are far too ready to introduce into serious discussions, for the purpose of casting disparagement upon some work which transcends the ordinary standards of appreciation, but a term nevertheless which has its important meaning and its

[1] Horne's *New Spirit of the Age.*

true place. Hood is too often like a man grinning awry, or interlarding serious and beautiful discourse with a nod, a wink, or a leer, neither requisite nor convenient as auxiliaries to his speech: and to do either of these things is to fail in perfect taste. Sometimes, not very often, we are allowed to reach the close of a poem of his without having our attention jogged and called off by a single interpolation of this kind; and then we feel unalloyed—what we constantly feel also even under the contrary conditions—how exquisite a poetic sense and choice a cunning of hand were his. On the whole, we can pronounce Hood the finest English poet between the generation of Shelley and the generation of Tennyson.

POETS BORN BETWEEN HOOD AND LONGFELLOW.

THOMAS BABINGTON LORD MACAULAY	1800 to 1859.
LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON	1802 to 1838.
THOMAS LOVELL BEDDOES.....	1803 to 1849.
EDWARD BULWER LORD LYTTON ...	1805 to 1873.

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

By the accident of his American nationality, Longfellow is the only living poet admitted into our series. I will preface what I find to say of him by a very few words regarding the poetry and poets of America pertaining to a date preceding that of his birth, 1807.

Looking back to the opening era of British settlements in North America, we have to note Mrs. Anne Bradstreet, who published in 1640 a volume of poetry which earned her some considerable celebrity. This is one of the earliest works in the form of verse printed in British America. Probably the first native-born poet was Benjamin Thomson, born at Dorchester (now named Quincey) in 1640: he wrote *New England's Crisis* towards the year 1676, and died in 1714 at the age of seventy-four. James Ralph, a friend of Franklin, produced several plays, some of which were acted at Drury Lane, and various poems as well. Two of these, *Cynthia* and *Night*, are ridiculed in a couplet of Pope's *Dunciad*. The satirized author died in 1762. Franklin himself composed some verses: those named *Paper* are among the best known. The first tragedy written on American soil, and by a native author, was *The Prince of Parthia*, by Thomas Godfrey, who died in 1763, at the early age of twenty-six. Coming to a less remote date, we may name—President John Quincy Adams, born in 1767; Washington Alston the painter, 1779; John Pierpont, 1785; William Cullen

Byrant, 1794; Fitz-Greene Halleck, 1795; and Ralph Waldo Emerson, 1803.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, son of the Honourable Stephen Longfellow, was born at Portland, in the State of Maine, United States, on the 27th of February 1807. Stephen Longfellow, who died in 1849, was an eminent lawyer and member of Congress, coming of a family which emigrated from England to America in the seventeenth century. He married a lady descended from John Alden, the first of the "Pilgrim Fathers" to land at Plymouth, New England, from the *Mayflower*. In 1825, at the close of four years' study, Henry graduated with distinguished honours at Bowdoin College, Brunswick. The profession contemplated by or for him was that of the law, and he received some training accordingly in his father's office. Even before this, while still an under-graduate at college, he had frequently sent verses to the *United States Literary Gazette*: some of his writings in this journal are re-printed in the *Voices of the Night*, published in 1839. He also contributed æsthetic criticisms to the *North American Review*. After a while he found that his literary was decidedly stronger than his legal bent; and he aimed at re-entering Bowdoin College in the character of Professor of Modern Languages, for which a chair had newly been established there. With a view to qualifying for this honourable post, he made his first tour in Europe, beginning in 1826, and lasting three years. He passed through France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Holland, and England. This trip both charmed and impressed him greatly, as we may gather from his prose-work *Outremer*, and the prose tale of sentiment, *Hyperion*, as well as from several of his poems. Indeed, we see throughout his writings the man who has glanced over many races and regions, and many epochs too; and the *evenness* of culture and of receptivity is one of his more prominent characteristics, and might somewhat derogate from his standing as a national poet in America, were it not that he has *Hiawatha*

and in a less degree *Evangeline*, and yet other single works, whereon to rest his claims for consideration in that line.

Longfellow returned to America in 1829, and entered on the duties of the professorship to which he had received the appointment. He continued also to be a frequent contributor, in the way of biographical articles and literary critiques, to the *North American Review*. His first volume was a translation of the *Coplas* of Jorge Manrique, preceded by an Essay on Spanish Poetry, in 1833. On the resignation of Professor Ticknor in 1835, Longfellow passed from Bowdoin College to the chair of Modern Languages and Belles Lettres in Harvard University. This removal was again preceded by a visit to Europe, 1835 and 1836: he spent more than a year in Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Northern Germany, Tyrol, and Switzerland, and familiarized himself with the Scandinavian tongues and literature. In the autumn of 1836 he was back in America, and continued up to 1854 in the exercise of the duties of his professorship, with the interval of another short tour in Europe (France, Germany, and England) for the benefit of his health in 1842. A further visit to England, Italy, &c., terminated in 1870. In 1854 the poet, then a man of renown widely diffused over both hemispheres, resigned his professorship, and he lives in the enjoyment of his Bostonian literary leisure, with his family, surrounded by a large circle of friends. He has since 1837 resided in the Craigie House, Cambridge, Massachusetts, the head-quarters of Washington after the battle of Bunker's Hill. He is highly and deservedly esteemed, not only as a man of letters, but for his honourable, straightforward, and unaffected character.

Mr. Longfellow has been twice married, in 1831 and 1843. His first wife died at Rotterdam in 1835. A deplorable calamity brought his second marriage to a conclusion, his wife having been burned to death through her clothes' catching fire as she was using lighted sealing-wax. This occurred in 1861.

Besides what has been said above of the sequence of Longfellow's writings, the following details may be noted. *Outremer* was published in 1835, and the tales of *Hyperion* and *Kavanagh* in 1839 and 1849 respectively; *Ballads and other Poems* in 1841; *The Spanish Student and Poems on Slavery* in 1842; *The Belfry of Bruges and other Poems* in 1846: *Evangeline* in 1848; *Seaside and Fireside* in 1850; *The Golden Legend* in 1851; *Hiawatha* in 1855; *The Marriage of Miles Standish &c.* in 1858; the *Tales of a Wayside Inn* (first series) in 1863; the translation of Dante's *Commedia* in 1867; the *New England Tragedies* in 1868; the *Divine Tragedy* and *Three Books of Song* in 1872; *Aftermath* in 1873 (the last-named two volumes are mainly continuations of the *Wayside Inn*); *The Hanging of the Crane, the Masque of Pandora, and other Poems*, in 1875. The three works, *The Divine Tragedy*, *The Golden Legend*, and the *New England Tragedies*, were in 1873 reissued under the joint designation of *Christus, a Mystery*.

Longfellow's translation from Dante is in blank verse, and of very uncommon merit in point of faithfulness, admitting few departures from direct word-for-word rendering. The illustrative matter appended to it comes from a wide area of selection, and is both valuable and attractive. The *New England Tragedies* have not been received with such an amount of favour as to suggest that they will eventually rank among the author's most popular works. By his own avowal he wrote these dramas "for the moral that they teach"; a very imprudent enterprise for a veteran writer, who might have laid to heart the truth that morals do not make tragedies, and that good intentions serve as pavement to some other place than the Palace of Art. *The Hanging of the Crane* is a poem of very moderate length, in seven parts, relating to the joys and chastenings of a happy married life, from wedlock up to the Golden Wedding; in general conception it bears a certain

resemblance to Schiller's *Song of the Bell*. *The Divine Tragedy* is a presentation, in dramatic form, of the main incidents of the mission of Jesus, divided into "Three Passovers." It is a daring attempt to combine the phrases of gospel-discourse with connecting or amplifying matter from the author's own repertory: how far successful, our reader may test to some extent by the following short extract.—

> "*Christus.* The wind bloweth where it listeth, and we hear
> The sound thereof; but know not whence it cometh
> Nor whither it goeth. So is every one
> Born of the spirit.
> *Nicodemus* (*aside*). How can these things be?
> He seems to speak of some vague realm of shadows,
> Some unsubstantial kingdom of the air!
> It is not this the Jews are waiting for,
> Nor can this be the Christ the Son of David
> Who shall deliver us.
> *Christus.* Art thou a master
> Of Israel, and knowest not these things?"

There are some things that masters in the literary Israel likewise are asked to know, or in default to take the consequences.

In addition to his own very numerous original or translated works, Mr. Longfellow has been engaged in some undertakings of editorship or compilation. Thus, in company with Mr. C. C. Felton, he produced, in 1845, *The Poets and Poetry of Europe, with Introductions and Biographical Notices;* in 1846, a collection of poems from various sources, named *The Waif;* and in 1847, another, *The Estray*. *Hiawatha*, besides any number of translations into modern languages, has been turned into Latin by Professor F. W. Newman (published in 1862); it was also made the subject of musical treatment at Covent Garden in 1861.

Could contemporary popularity pledge posterity for fame, Longfellow would be secure. He must have been, among English-speaking people, the most widely read poet, by far, living within the last third of a century. Indeed, save Tenny-

son, he can have had no even distant rival; and no doubt the number of Longfellow's readers, in America, England, and the English colonies, must have greatly exceeded Tennyson's, and his proportional superiority, in point of translations and of the foreign readers thereby accruing, will have been even larger. But all this counts for little in the reckoning with posterity; for that purpose, what we have to look to is the actual quality of the work, and the *grounds* upon which this vast immediate popularity has rested.

Perhaps the main constituent of Longfellow as a poetical writer is intelligence. I mean "intelligence" in the current semi-technical sense wherein that word is used—as we speak of the "intelligence" of the age, or of "the intelligent classes," or "intelligent working-man." Intelligence in this sense is not to be confounded with "intellect" in a more abstract or exalted application of the term: the most "intelligent" man is not necessarily the most "intellectual"—still less, the greatest for the higher purposes of the poetic or other noble art. This intelligence is a certain openness to information of all sorts, and a readiness at turning it to practical account; a workmanlike knowledge and mastery of all kinds of mental tools; in especial, a great susceptibility to "the spirit of the age." It presupposes considerable culture co-related to its own direct objects; in the case of Mr. Longfellow, this culture is both solid and spacious. He is in a high sense a literary man; and next, a literary artist; and thirdly, a literary artist in the domain of poetry. It would not be true to say that his art is of the intensest kind or most magical potency; but it is art, and imbues whatever he performs. In so far as a literary artist in poetry is a poet, Longfellow is a poet, and should (to the silencing of all debates and demurs) be freely confessed and handsomely installed as such. How far he is a poet in a further sense than this remains to be determined.

Having thus summarily considered "the actual quality of the

work" as derived from the endowments of the worker, I next proceed to "the grounds upon which the vast popularity of the poems has rested." One main and in itself all-sufficient ground has just been stated: that the sort of intelligence of which Longfellow is so conspicuous an example includes preëminently "a great susceptibility to the spirit of the age." The man who meets the spirit of the age halfway will be met halfway by that; will be adopted as a favourite child, and warmly reposited in the heart. Such has been the case with Longfellow. In sentiment, in perception, in culture, in selection, in utterance, he represents, with adequate and even influential but not overwhelming force, the tendencies and adaptabilities of the time; he is a good type of the "bettermost," not the exceptionally very best, minds of the central or later-central period of the nineteenth century; and, having the gift of persuasive speech and accomplished art, he can enlist the sympathies of readers who approach his own level of intelligence, and can dominate a numberless multitude of those who belong to lower planes, but who share none the less his own general conceptions and aspirations. He is like a wide-spreading tree on the top of a gentle acclivity, to which the lines of all trees lower down point and converge, and of which the shadow rests upon them with kindly proximity and protection. This is popularity. The question whether the popularity will be prolonged into enduring fame is much the same as the question in what degree the spirit of our own age will be operative in time to come. As long as it *is* operative, the same relation between Longfellow and the public of poetic readers will subsist: when it declines, his influence will also wane, unless some other and supereminent qualities are his, appealing to that which is permanent in man, and not transitional as one generation yields its place to another.

The poetic performances of Longfellow may perhaps be distinguished into three categories. In the first of these there

is a certain pretence—an inflation of mind, and over-strained *ad captandum* use of temporary catch-words or figure-heads of thought and sentiment, an audible and visible appeal to "the finest feelings of our nature"—an essentially false note, predestined to be found out in the long run. The finest feelings of our nature are indeed the things most deserving to be appealed to: but there is a way of appealing to them which smacks not less of the assertion, "I am myself the man who knows these feelings and can rouse them in you," than of any more modest frame of mind, or simpler phase of natural emotion; and this may strike some people as too often the way in which Mr. Longfellow apostrophizes them. *Excelsior* appears to me to be prominently one of these compositions. They will not only not be enduringly admired, but will be rejected with some degree of angry irritation. The second class includes the great bulk of his writing. It is good enough for its time and its public, and is even within limits good intrinsically; but has not any such powerful vital stamina as to survive chance and change, the perpetual flux of things: it is not of the stuff to remain a fixed quantity when so much else, in mind and matter, shall have altered. The third class includes some small compositions here and there, and in especial the two long poems, *Evangeline* and *Hiawatha*, published respectively in 1847 and 1855. These, if I am not mistaken, are works made for posterity and for permanence. *Evangeline*, whatever may be its shortcomings and blemishes, takes so powerful a hold of the feelings that the fate which would at last merge it in oblivion could only be a very hard and even a perverse one. Who that has read it has ever forgotten it? or in whose memory does it rest as other than a long-drawn sweetness and sadness that has become a portion, and a purifying portion, of the experiences of the heart? *Hiawatha* has a different claim. It is a work *sui generis*, and alone; moreover, manly, interesting, and a choice and difficult piece of execution, without strain or parade. The native

American legends and aboriginal tone of thought have to be preserved in some form or other, as a matter of natural and national necessity: they are here compactly preserved in a good poem, the work of a skilled artist. Were there a better poem than *Hiawatha* forthcoming for the particular purpose, the fate of this work would be remitted to casualty. But it is the first, may be the last, of any distinguished value, and is amply fine enough to endure. I can hardly imagine it superseded, nor, until superseded, overlooked.

This leads us to consider for a moment whether Longfellow has impressed himself upon the time, or qualified for posterity, as the American poet *par excellence*. I do not think he has. *Hiawatha* will live as the poem of the American native tribes, not as the poem of America; *Evangeline* will live as an idyll of the heart associated with American scenery in close-linked intercommunion, but also not as an absolutely national and typical work: and the other compositions of Longfellow having claims of the same order appear to be in full measure subject to the chances and mischances of "natural selection in the struggle for life." The real American poet is Walt Whitman—a man enormously greater than Longfellow or any other of his poetic compatriots.

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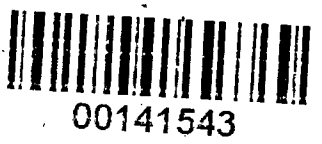

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